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STEAL THEIR SECRETS. P90

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ABOVE & BEYOND



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Features listed are standard on Akera model shown. MAZ11327_MH



zoom-zoom



IMAGINATION DRIVES US

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FITNESS FREAKS OF THE NRL

Reach new heights by copying the training methods of rugby league's finest athletes.

BY GRANT TAYLOR



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LIVE A LIFE LESS ORDINARY

Discover how the typical Aussie male thinks, works and plays – then rise above him.

COMPILED BY DANIEL WILLIAMS



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WHAT ARE YOU PACKIN'?

Say goodbye to mundane lunch-hour fare with these eight killer feeds.

BY RAY KLERCK



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THE LUST LIST

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BY LAURA TEDESCO



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THE MAN WHO FEELS NO PAIN

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BY OLIVER BROUDY



MH COVER GUY NIKOLAJ COSTER-WALDAU
PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVID CLERHEW



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AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 ADVENTURES

Apathy-terminating trips to book ASAP.

BY MH WRITERS

Hard work isn't always its own reward, you think to yourself as spent legs carry a tired mind away from another workout. Routines need shaking up. As the road blurs by beneath you and the wind whips by above – you realise it's a rush of life at the top of the world you need and maybe a little exercise in self-control. They weren't that hard to find, these hidden mountain roads high above it all – neither was a feeling of freedom, of a sense of balance restored. Perhaps it's time to tell your own story – one written by winding roads and bound by endless skies. Arrange a test-drive at your preferred BMW dealer.

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The girls we fall hardest for.



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Turn to page 32 for details.

BEYOND THE NORM

Four millimetres isn't a lot. In physical terms it roughly amounts to the length of a fully grown ladybird, the layer of chocolate on a Tim-Tam or the total circumference of Todd Carney's common sense. But, for me, this tiny dimension holds greater significance. During the course of this issue, I was overjoyed to discover that the height of the average Aussie man is 175.6 centimetres. By the faintest of margins, I scrape just over the line to measure up at 176cm.

Frankly, I'm not sure what's more pitiful here. The fact that I instinctively drew the comparison in the first place or that I found it so pathetically gratifying to make the cut. This, after all, is a victory so hollow that if you listen carefully you can still hear the echo.

Then again, deep down, everyone likes to know how they stack up. Whether it's at work, in the gym, at home or in the bedroom, you wonder how you compare to your fellow man. Initially, you just want to discover if you're "normal" (or at least not totally psychotic). Then, having established the basic pass-mark, you naturally want to rise above it.

That's why in this issue we've conducted our Mr Average Survey to create a statistical portrait of the modern Australian man. At *Men's Health*, our mission is to give you the edge in every area of your life. But to propel yourself onwards and upwards, you need to know the baseline from where you can kick on from ordinary to extraordinary. And that's where our survey comes in.

Some of the results were predictable (31 per cent of *MH* readers regard not finishing a beer as "poor form"). Some reveal efficient multi-tasking (69 per cent have logged onto Facebook while on the toilet). Others are genuinely alarming (when it came to your top "Guy Films", *Top Gun* rated higher than *The Godfather*).

I wasn't surprised, however, to discover that only six per cent of respondents would sacrifice two centimetres of height to gain 250,000 Twitter followers. Naturally, I'm in the majority camp on this one. Fiercely guarding every last millimetre, there's no way I could stoop so low.



Luke Benedictus

Twitter: @LukeBenedictus

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THE NEW FRAGRANCE FOR MEN

Does drinking really kill brain cells? – MC

MORNING-AFTER PARANOIA?

Calm down, big guy. “The alcohol in the brain of even a very drunk person isn’t close to the levels needed to kill cells,” says Stephen Braun, author of *Buzz: The Science and Lore of Alcohol and Caffeine*. But booze is a “dirty bomb”, he warns. It blocks memory formation, dulls thinking and lowers muscle control. Your move after a heavy night? Well, your head may not want to hear bass, but Sunway University College found tracks that play at 120 BPM – think melodic house or Detroit techno – can stimulate grey matter and improve focus. →



POLICE



NEYMAR JR

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ASK MH

When I'm sick, where do I draw the line between being soft or being too ill for work? – GJ

USED UP ALL YOUR sickies over summer, mate? Well, if you're really crook your boss should probably thank you for not showing up. "Nobody is going to win a prize for turning up to work sick, especially when your colleagues get sick," say Dr Daniel Byrne, Chair of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners in South Australia and the Northern Territory. If you have a cold but feel fine, you may as well go to work, given it's likely you've already spread these reasonably harmless germs before you even knew you were carrying them. "It's when you have a fever, aches or anything gastro that you should stay home and give yourself the best treatment – rest," says Byrne. While gastro is mostly unavoidable, autumn is the perfect time to get a flu shot, before winter hits, he advises.



How can I tell if I'm losing fat or fluid when I hit the gym? – PO

While the scales are the first to know about last night's blowout, you'll have to step off them to get your answer. If you've shed the flab rapidly, it's likely to be water weight, particularly if you've recently cut out pasta and bread. For every gram of glycogen in carbs, there's four times the amount of water, so in a bid to banish fat, your numbers will be dropping for the wrong reasons. "You can only really lose up to 1.35 kilograms of fat a week," says performance nutritionist Martin MacDonald. "Any more will be water or muscle." Eat no fewer than 130 grams of carbs a day to cut flab while maintaining fat-burning muscle. That'll buy you half a pizza but cost you extra time in the gym – a decent trade-off.

STARCH RIVALS

Skip both sets of scales and use everyday measures to find the amount of carbs you need to see body fat drop



BREAKFAST
Two handfuls
of rolled oats
= 33g



LUNCH
One medium
sweet potato
= 26g



DINNER
Half a cup of raw
basmati rice
= 71g

TOTAL: YOUR IDEAL CARB ALLOWANCE

I always burn out on my runs. How can I pace myself better? – TT



Follow the example of the world's top distance runners. "These guys like to start their runs barely jogging," says Andrew Kastor, coaching director for the Los Angeles Marathon. On your next run, apply the "rule of thirds". Consider the first third your warm-up; you should be able to comfortably carry on a conversation at this pace. In the middle, increase your tempo to goal pace. For the final third, maintain your speed or step on the gas. If you can't do either then you're still starting too fast, says Kastor. What about using a heart-rate monitor to gauge your effort levels? According to Kastor, the monitor may not tell you much on longer runs. That's because your body becomes more efficient the greater the distance, so your heart rate may not fluctuate even as you speed up. You're better off finding your perfect pace by feel, not numbers.

A person is seen from behind, standing on a rocky cliff edge. They are wearing a green and light green ASICS athletic shirt, black shorts, green socks, and running shoes. Their hands are clasped behind their head, and they are looking out over a vast cityscape and a large volcano in the distance under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

IT'S A BIG WORLD. GO RUN IT.

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Ask the Girls in the Office

Ask the *MH* girls the questions you can't ask anyone else. They're three women with strong opinions, so don't expect sugar-coated responses



Got a question for Ask Men's Health or The Girls in the Office? Email menshealth@pacificmags.com.au or head to yahoo7.com.au/menshealth.

Q I've recently taken up yoga to improve my flexibility, but whenever I tell girls, they laugh and crack cruel jokes about my (lack of) masculinity. What do you reckon – should I keep quiet? – **CS**

Cassie I'm a yoga teacher, CS, and I'm telling you, blokes need to be doing it. So ignore the giggles, put on your leggings and get downward.

Crystelle Maybe keep your downward dogs on the DL for the first couple of dates, CS. I'm all for a guy who can rock a tree pose, but girls can be shallow and the last thing you need is for her to mentally cross you off her "possible partners" list just 'cause you like a good stretch.

Alice Jeremy Piven, Robert Downey Jnr, Colin Farrell, Adam Levin, Mathew McConaughey... Just a few of your flexi-friendly mates, CS. Guys who do yoga, or anything that encourages a healthy mind and body, should be high-fived.

Q Why do ladies always need to go to the toilet right before getting it on? What are you really doing in there? – **JR**

Crystelle Ha! Nice question, JR. I can only speak for myself here, but peeing, checking my make-up and fixing my hair is usually what's going on. Alice, Cass, what are you girls getting up to?

Alice Ninety-nine per cent of the time, I'm doing a whiz. Getting frisky with a full bladder is likely to end up messy. No-one likes a wet blanket. The other one per cent? I'll never tell.

Cassie Urinate. Check breath. Smell pits. Practise pout.

Q Why do guys always have to text first? – **AG**

Cassie They do? But what happens if he doesn't and neither does she? If no-one texts first then no-one gets a text. Why can't someone just send a text? I'm confused.

Crystelle Generally speaking, AG, it just works better when guys do the chasing. Simple as that.

Alice Blame evolution. A man likes to feel he's conquered a woman before going back to his man-cave, beating his un-manscaped chest and downing some rare ribs.

Q My mates are planning a massive buck's for me in Vegas – but my future missus isn't happy about it. I don't want to let the boys down, but I also don't want to deal with the fallout from my girl. What's my move? – **TH**

Crystelle My dad's favourite saying is "happy wife, happy life". But then again, no girl likes a pushover. I'd stand your ground on this one, TH. She needs to be able to trust you, and you don't want to start your marriage by feeling trapped.

Alice You've got the perfect out – blame your mates. Mrs TH can't get peeved if the lads' idea of fun isn't all things chats and Jatz. She needs to accept that you'll probably spend too many Benjamins, develop the beginnings of a beer gut and see a few "shows". But she also needs to remember you're coming home to her. For life.

Cassie Hang on, isn't this your buck's party, TH? Why not suggest you and the boys join the ladies at the day spa for her hen's? If she's trying to control your buck's party, what else is she going to control down the track?



REVEAL

Calvin Klein



A NEW FRAGRANCE FOR HIM

#REVEALMORE

BE TWICE THE GENTLEMAN.



Gentlemen: note the additions. The all new MINI 5-door hatch comes with two more doors. With all new safety features, new engines, an illuminated LED centre instrument, head-up display, parking assist and extra space in the back and the boot, once you're in it's the most fun you can have in a 5-door on four wheels. See what doors it opens for you at 5-door.MINI.com.au

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NEW

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SPORT

IS AN STI BREWING?

Careful with those beer goggles, big fella: booze significantly raises your odds of infection with the human papillomavirus (HPV), a study at Florida's Moffitt Cancer Centre reveals. The researchers found that men who consumed the most alcohol – on average more than two-and-a-half drinks a day – had a 13 per cent increased risk of contracting any kind of HPV strain than light drinkers.

While the study doesn't show cause and effect, the findings point to a possible link between excess alcohol consumption and weakened immunity to HPV, says study author Dr Matthew Schabath. Alcohol, even in moderation, can dampen your immune system, he says.

Your move: condoms offer some protection against infection; or speak to your GP about your suitability for HPV vaccination.

Now trending in health and fitness

edited by Ben Jhojy

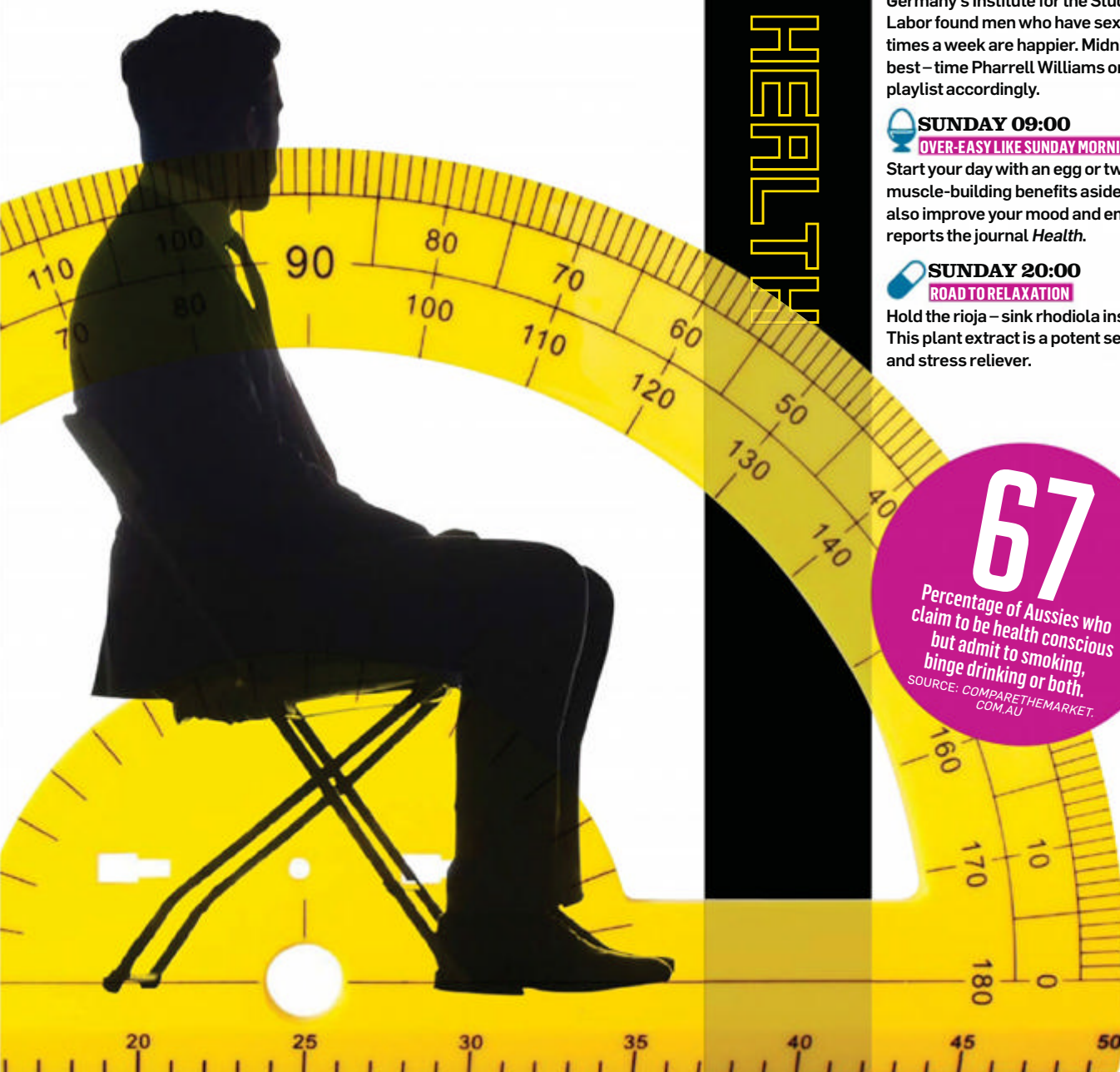
NEWS FEED

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SET YOURSELF STRAIGHT

Career in a slump? Check your posture. According to a study at the University of Auckland, slouching can sabotage your work performance. People who sat in a slumped position did worse in mock interviews than those who sat upright, while their self-esteem ratings were around 10 points lower after their dud interviews. Sitting up straight makes you more alert and acts as a coping response in high-pressure situations, says study author Dr Elizabeth Broadbent.



NEWS FEED HEALTH

Beat The Back-to-Work Blues

Back-to-work anxiety has become an epidemic. Immunise yourself against melancholy with this weekend timeline:



FRIDAY 19:00

TAKE WORK HOME

Doing tasks at home stops you stressing about Monday. But only work on three: University of Missouri research found too much choice leaves you angsty.



SATURDAY 08:00

WAKE-UP CALL

A sleep-in today causes Sunday-night insomnia, say researchers at Michigan University. Keep the coffee handy.



SATURDAY 23:00

DOWN TO BUSINESS

Germany's Institute for the Study of Labor found men who have sex four times a week are happier. Midnight's best – time Pharrell Williams on your playlist accordingly.



SUNDAY 09:00

OVER-EASY LIKE SUNDAY MORNING

Start your day with an egg or two: muscle-building benefits aside, they also improve your mood and energy, reports the journal *Health*.



SUNDAY 20:00


ROAD TO RELAXATION

Hold the rioja – sink rhodiola instead. This plant extract is a potent sedative and stress reliever.

67

Percentage of Aussies who claim to be health conscious but admit to smoking, binge drinking or both.

SOURCE: COMPARETHEMARKET.COM.AU

A man in a blue suit is floating in the air, looking directly at the camera. He is positioned in front of a modern glass skyscraper with a curved facade. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The man's suit is a deep blue, and he is wearing a white shirt and a patterned tie. His legs are spread apart, and his arms are outstretched, giving the impression of being in mid-air or falling. The building's glass reflects the sky and the man's figure.

VAN HEUSEN

— MOVE —

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STUNTMAN NASH EDGERTON

THE HALO EFFECT

Don't hate the player – or the game. According to researchers from the universities of Rochester and Geneva, playing video games can make you smarter.

In a series of studies, people who regularly play fast-paced action games like *Halo* and *Call of Duty* were found to be better at multitasking, performing cognitive tasks, and focusing and retaining information. They even have better vision.



NEWS FEED BRAIN

14

Percentage boost in grey matter in people a decade after they started eating fish weekly, compared with people who didn't.

SOURCE: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

THINK TANK

Here's something to exercise your mind over: according to a new study, simply imagining that you're working out can make you stronger. Ohio University researchers recruited 29 volunteers and wrapped their wrists in surgical casts for a month. Half of the subjects were instructed to think about exercising their immobilised wrists for 11 minutes a day. When the casts were removed, the volunteers who'd done the cognitive exercises had twice the wrist strength of those who hadn't flexed their mental muscles.



SWEETER DREAMS

Strategic naps unlock areas of your brain that instantly enhance memory, energy and creativity, according to a study from the University of South Australia. Here's the catch: it only works if you avoid waking during REM sleep. Get jolted from the deep stuff and you risk "sleep inertia", otherwise known as grogginess.



10 MINS

A classic power nap. This is best for boosting alertness, as the shorter length keeps you in the lighter states of non-rapid-eye-movement (NREM). You'll wake up fresh.



30 MINS

Research suggests sleeping for half an hour causes sleep inertia, which can leave you in a hangover-like state. Take this nap at your peril.



60 MINS

This is the ideal length for remembering facts – useful if you're cramming for work or an interview. It induces deep, slow-wave sleep.



90+ MINS

Welcome to a full cycle. This amount lets you hit NREM and REM, which raises creativity abilities. No midday hangover for you.




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3 SETS, 10 REPS

The most efficient combination of sets and reps for muscle growth.

SOURCE: LEHMAN COLLEGE



LIFT YOUR GAME

OLD RULE

Focusing on internal cues (such as driving your torso up during a push-up) is the best way to maintain good form while training.

NEW RULE

Generate more force and bang out more reps by focusing on external cues (such as shoving the ground away during a push-up), according to a review in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*. To move more weight, use the cues below.

- **CHIN-UP**
Pull the bar towards the floor.
- **DEADLIFT**
Anchor your feet to the floor and drive the bar towards the ceiling.
- **SQUAT**
Push the floor away and apart with your feet.

• **PLANK** •
Imagine that you have one glass of water resting on your head and another on your hips. Don't spill a drop.



NEWS FEED FITNESS

PUSH YOURSELF TO NEW HEIGHTS

Next time you do an overhead press, give yourself a push. The push press can help you build serious lower-body power, say researchers at the Chichester and Salford universities. When participants performed the move, they exerted the same amount of force into the ground as they did during a barbell jump squat. The take-home: two moves for the price of one. Aim for 3-5 sets of 3-5 reps once a week.



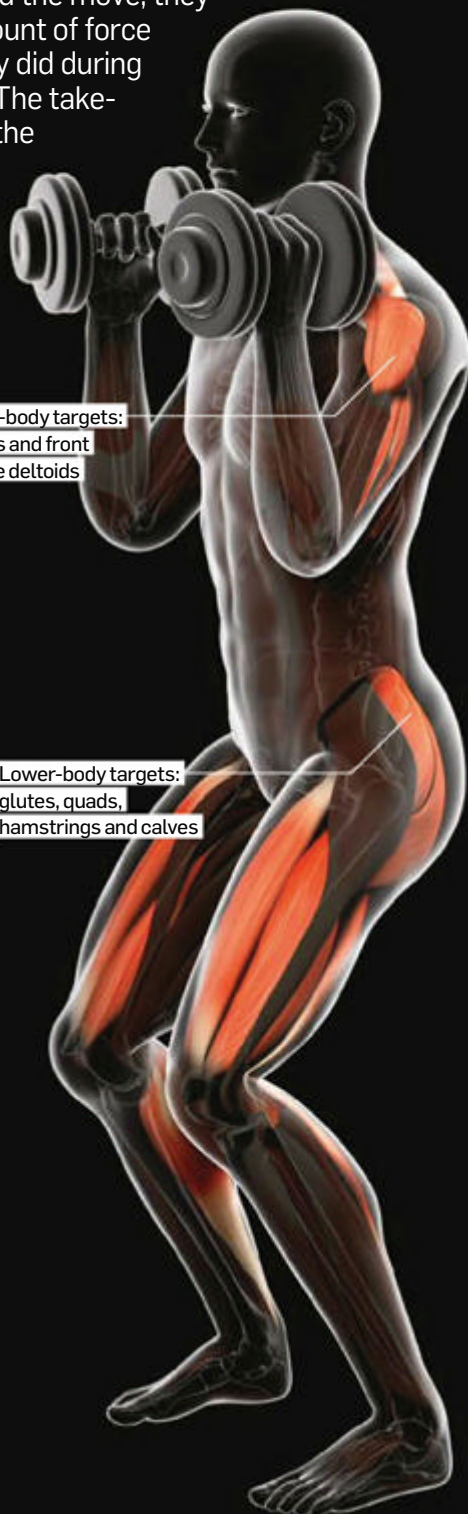
STEP 1

Hold the dumbbells in front of your shoulders and dip your knees



STEP 2

Push explosively with your legs and press the weights up



Upper-body targets:
triceps and front
middle deltoids

Lower-body targets:
glutes, quads,
hamstrings and calves

FLIRTING WITH DANGER

A buddy says nice things about your girl? All good. Women, on the other hand, tend to be wary of other women who compliment you, reports an Arcadia University study. More so than men, women watch out for potential mate poachers – especially their gal pals, who'd know if a relationship has hit a rough patch, says study author Dr Christina Brown. Your best moves, says Brown: thank a female flatterer and move away. Then lean towards your girl or put an arm around her.



NEWS FEED SEX



THE PERCENTAGE OF "MANSCAPERS" WHO DON'T TREAT THEIR CROWN JEWELS DELICATELY ENOUGH AND CUT THEMSELVES.

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO

The Eight Ways Women Rate You

Nearly three-quarters of women judge you by your teeth, found a *match.com* survey. Here's what else they're clocking:



LIPS DON'T LIE

Sure, charm counts, but good kissing trumps personality and looks for women considering a long-term relationship, a study in the journal *Evolutionary Psychology* reports. Women preferred men described as good kissers – and photographs of the men didn't change their choice. One reason: your saliva offers clues to your current health, says researcher Dr Robin Dunbar. Plus, he adds, your saliva will taste pleasant to a woman who's a good genetic fit.

80
MILLION

The number of bacteria that are transferred in a 10-second kiss.

SOURCE: MICROBIOME JOURNAL

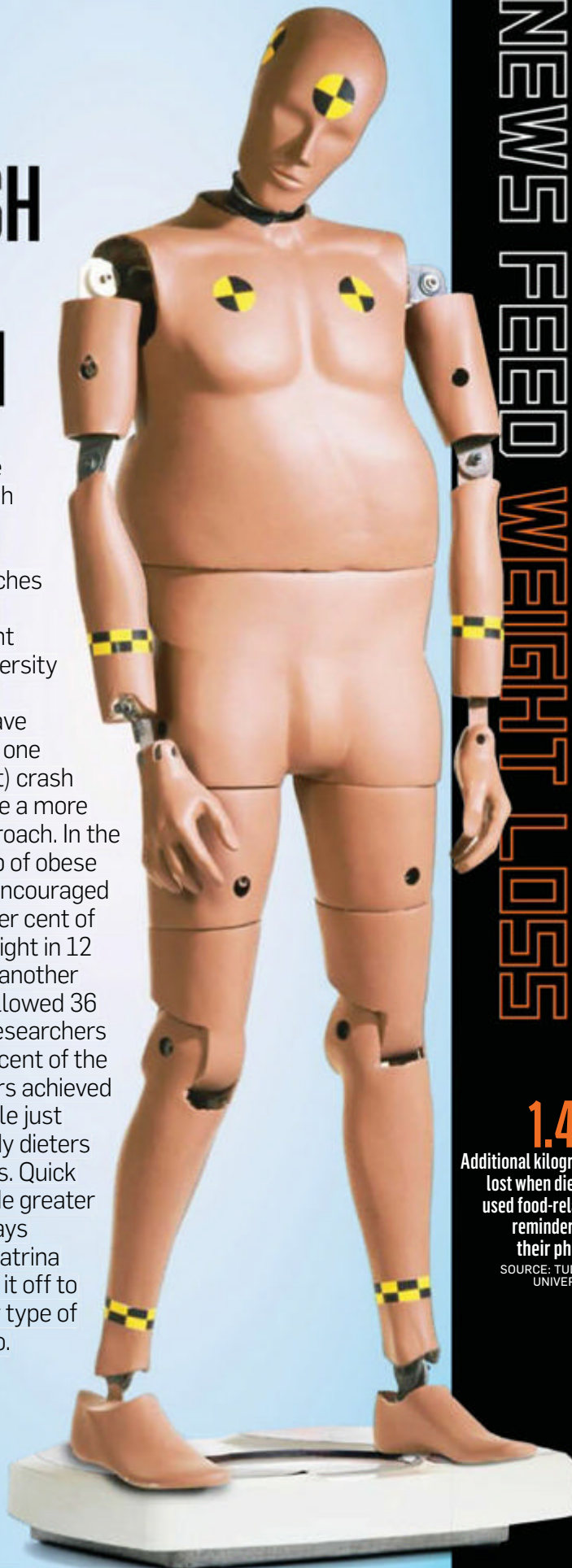


BEN SHERMAN



CRASH AND BURN

You've got to believe! In the power of crash diets, that is. Conventional wisdom preaches the virtues of gradual weight loss, but University of Melbourne researchers have found that (in one group at least) crash dieting may be a more effective approach. In the study, a group of obese adults were encouraged to lose 12.5 per cent of their body weight in 12 weeks, while another group were allowed 36 weeks. The researchers found 80 per cent of the rapid-shedders achieved their goal while just half the steady dieters reached theirs. Quick results provide greater motivation, says lead author Katrina Purcell. Keep it off to avoid another type of diet: the yo-yo.



NEWS FEED WEIGHT LOSS

1.44

Additional kilograms lost when dieters used food-related reminders on their phone.

SOURCE: TULANE UNIVERSITY

THE GLUTTON BUTTON

Celebrate with care: parties provide the strongest triggers for unhealthy snacking, according to a study from Utrecht University. "To prevent cravings, first identify your biggest trigger – like the chip bowl. Then make a plan to change the behaviour, such as picking the fruit platter," suggests study author Dr Aukje Verhoeven.

OUR TRIGGERS FOR SNACKING ON JUNK



IT'S PARTY TIME!

YOU CRAVE SOMETHING TASTY



TO GAIN MORE ENERGY

YOU'RE WATCHING TELEVISION



YOU FEEL YOU DESERVE IT

TO DEAL WITH SAD FEELINGS



TO PLEASE SOMEONE (AKA MUM)



Gain in BMI units above weight gain from other sources for each sports drink that young men drank per day.

SOURCE: OBESITY



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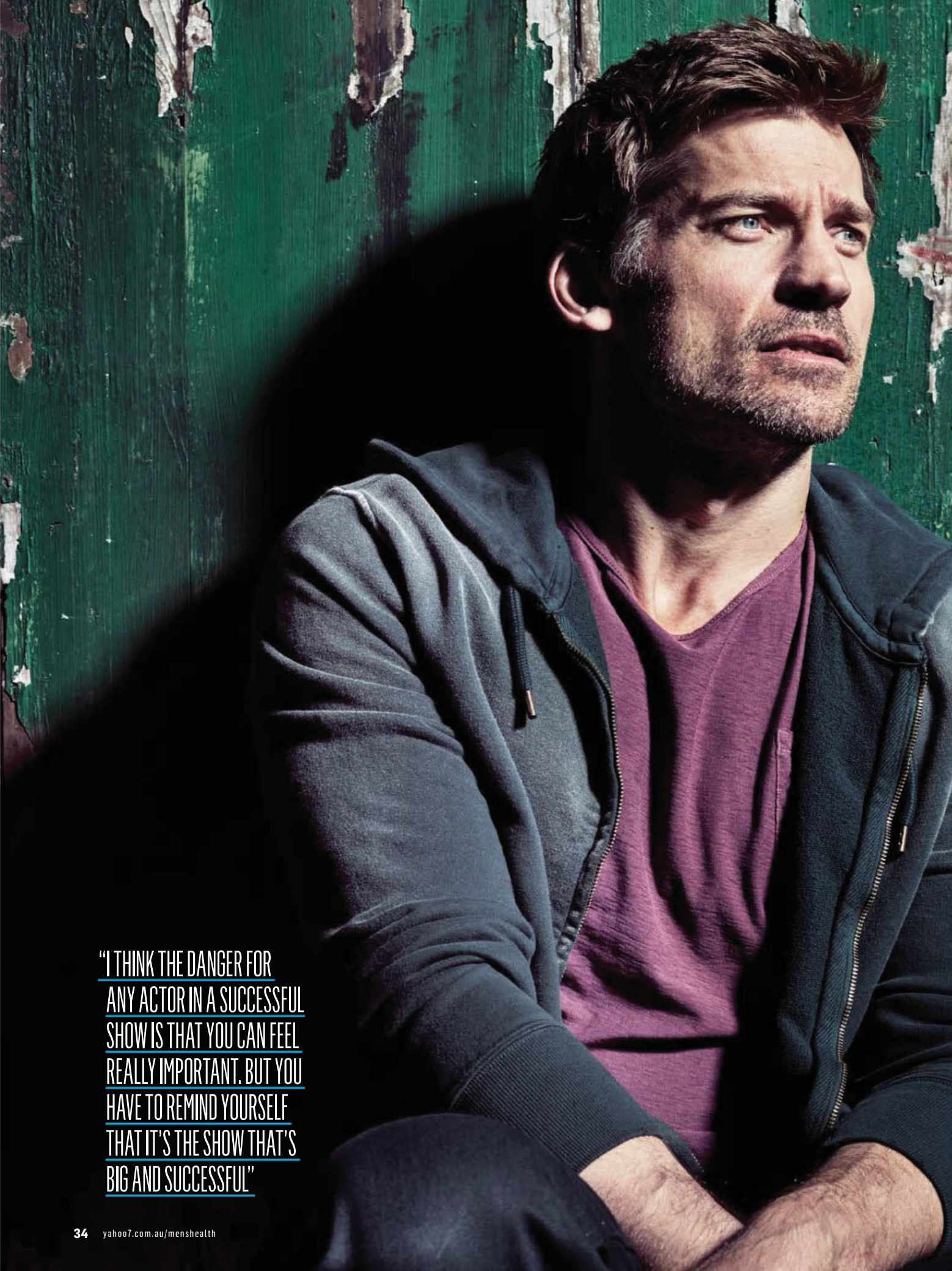
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"I THINK THE DANGER FOR
ANY ACTOR IN A SUCCESSFUL
SHOW IS THAT YOU CAN FEEL
REALLY IMPORTANT. BUT YOU
HAVE TO REMIND YOURSELF
THAT IT'S THE SHOW THAT'S
BIG AND SUCCESSFUL"



AHEAD OF THE GAME

When *Game of Thrones* upturned TV's power balance, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau's Jaime Lannister led the charge. As season five draws closer, he is remarkably relaxed for a man with one hand on the crown

BY DAVID MORTON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CLERIHEW

GAMES OF THRONES

UNLESS YOU'VE BEEN LIVING under Casterly Rock for the past four years, you will be aware that morning chat in the coffee queue is about to get a lot more fantastical. In a few weeks' time, the fifth series of HBO's *Game of Thrones* will begin, not as the "best thing since *The Wire*" or the "biggest thing since *The Sopranos*" but as the most successful small-screen production, ever.

The fourth season outstripped the record viewership numbers set by fellow HBO behemoth *The Sopranos*, and cost in the region of US\$6million for every hour of murder, magic and decapitation. It's the most-pirated show in the world and US President Barack Obama's favourite. If on-demand television is the new battleground of quality drama, *Game of Thrones* is winning the war.

Even so, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau is keeping his head down. As Jaime Lannister, he started life as the arrogant swordsman who announced himself in the very first episode by defenestrating a seven-year-old boy. By the end of season four he has become the most unlikely of antiheroes, his character arc neatly symbolising the growth of the show into an international giant. →

MH met the 44-year-old Dane in London, before he flew to Seville for more filming. In front of our camera, he is all wiry energy and alarming strength, spinning on monkey-bar rungs and chin-up bars, engaging everyone who passes. But in the quieter moments, between cups of strong coffee, he is calm and unswervingly considered.

"I think the danger for any actor in a successful show is that you can feel really important," he says. "You think, 'My God! People are chasing me around town in Seville.' But you have to remind yourself that it's the show that's big and successful.

"We have these bus tours around the locations in Belfast now. The trailer was parked next to a golf course and they caught some Norwegians hiding in the dunes. I don't know what they were trying to do other than just get behind the scenes. As soon as they saw me, they whipped out the books and the cameras. But again, that's the show. When I go home and get away from all of it, I don't have that craziness."

YOU WIN OR YOU DIE

Home for Coster-Waldau is just north of Copenhagen, where he lives with his wife, two daughters and a couple of dogs. It's as far from L.A.'s glitz as one can imagine, but it hasn't stopped him from making his mark on Hollywood. An audition tape recorded in his attic landed him a small part in Ridley Scott's 2001 war flick *Black Hawk Down*, with another role following in Scott's Crusades epic, *Kingdom of Heaven*, in 2005.

Since *Game of Thrones* thrust him sharply to the fore, he has starred opposite Tom Cruise in *Oblivion* and played the love interest of Cameron Diaz and Kate Upton in last year's rom-com *The Other Woman*, a day job that he describes drily as "not hard at all". Amid all this, Coster-Waldau credits his country for keeping him grounded.

"There is a Danish saying which translates as: 'Don't fly higher than your ears will carry you'. It means you shouldn't think you're any better than anyone else. We are all the same and shouldn't be treated any different. It might seem like it would make it hard to stand out or be an individual, but you can navigate through that and still push yourself forward."

When he's away from *GoT*, he insists on working out with a good friend so he can compete over every rep and each incremental increase in weight. When he's back on duty in Jaime's armour, he can't help but measure himself against the men alongside him.

Jason (Momoa), who played Khal Drogo, knows how to fight and how to

GAIN OF THRONES

SESSION 01 THE IRON PRINCE

Coster-Waldau and his PT Jesper Mouritzen fuse mobility moves with big lifts, using the 5-3-1 system. Start with 75 per cent of your max weight for five reps; rest; do three reps with 80 per cent; rest again; then do one rep at 90 per cent max. Perform his two sessions (here and overleaf) for a month to see royal results

FITNESS

NEVER HIT THE WALL

IF CARDIO FEELS LIKE HEAVY DUTY, TRY A DIFFERENT KIND. "I LOVE RUNNING BUT IT'S TOUGH ON YOUR BODY AND I'VE HAD BACK ISSUES," SAYS COSTER-WALDAU. SO HE DOES BODY-WEIGHT CIRCUITS INSTEAD - AND DOESN'T SWEAT ABOUT THE KAYS.

01

DEADLIFT

3 SETS OF 5-3-1 REPS

Grab the bar with an overhand grip. With your arms straight, extend your hips and knees to stand. Lower very slowly.

02

GOOD MORNING

5 SETS OF 12 REPS

With the barbell resting on your upper back, bend at the hips until your chest is parallel to the floor. Keep your back straight.

03

HANGING LEG RAISE

5 SETS OF 15 REPS

Hang from a chin-up bar with your knees and feet together. Lift your thighs to your chest, pause, then release back down.

use his body. But The Mountain (played by Hafþór Björnsson) is an Icelandic strongman who won Europe's Strongest Man contest last year. He's properly strong, not pump-it-up-in-the-gym strong. His arms are bigger than my thighs. He's the real deal."

In the flesh, it's clear Coster-Waldau doesn't fit the mould of the Hollywood action man. At 187 centimetres, he's lean and rangy rather than a brick who's stepped from the weights room straight into superhero spandex. But his slender frame belies genuine fitness, the sort that makes chin-ups no problem and renders

cardio redundant. If you're slim and want to work on your strength, his approach to training is a lesson in building functional muscle for life, not just for the moment.

"Over the next few months, I'm going to start bulking up, so I'm concentrating on the fundamentals - heavy deadlifts, heavy squats," he says. "But as I've grown older, I spend more time on mobility. When you're 20, your body has the ability to bounce back. These days I have a lot of different massage balls I use to loosen up. But I feel stronger now than I ever have."

While punishing yourself physically is now part and parcel of an action film →

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career (see Chris Pratt in *Guardians of the Galaxy*, Henry Cavill in *Man of Steel* and Christian Bale in general). Coster-Waldau prefers a less agonising approach. Like other older leading men – Hugh Jackman and Will Smith spring to mind – he swaps the yo-yo for the longer game.

"I'm very lucky in that people will pay me for doing what I love to do. But the thing about getting fit is that it takes time," he says. "I've done it before, I got in really good shape and then finished the job, relaxed, and didn't do anything for far too long. The road back is too painful. Now I never let go completely and I stay above a certain point, even if I'm not working towards something. I guess you could say I'm looking at it professionally. But to be honest, as I'm getting older, I just feel better being fit."

Coster-Waldau's laid-back constancy encircles all aspects of his day-to-day, including his vices. Unfazed by junk food ("If you hear a star say, 'Oh yeah, I always go to McDonald's' they're lying") or alcohol ("I can enjoy wine but I've been insulated from alcohol by my family experiences – drinking too much is not a good thing"), he's happier in his state of rational equilibrium. When it comes to his diet, though, he admits that he has seen the value of being extreme – an awful lot of protein, all day, every day.

"You read about how much protein certain people eat and hear people talk about it in the gym. But it's not until you experience the results that you really understand," he says. "I've always exercised hard and thought I ate healthily, so I assumed muscle would come. But if you want to bulk up, trust me, you do really need to eat a shitload of protein."

For him, that constitutes five eggs for breakfast with some vegetables and salmon, a protein shake a couple of hours later, then a lunch of two skinless chicken breasts with some more vegetables and another shake. Dinner is a few extra carbs with another slab of protein.

"It's the constant eating which I find exhausting," he says. "But I know actors who go on even more full-on diets – like Jason, for example. He's very advanced in that whole bulking-up thing and will almost always carry a chicken breast on his body. You can always find it in a pocket there. Somewhere, there is chicken."

FIGHT TO THE DEATH

Next time you see Coster-Waldau on the big screen, he will be opposite Gerard Butler in the fantasy epic *Gods of Egypt*, due in 2016. He is stily reserved on the subject of his co-star, whom he describes as "a man of the world who has had a lot

"THE THING ABOUT GETTING FIT IS THAT IT TAKES TIME. I GOT IN GOOD SHAPE BEFORE, THEN I RELAXED. THE ROAD BACK IS TOO PAINFUL"

fun", but says that they never went to the gym together ("I'd crush him").

He is, however, happy to tackle a more serious matter – who would win in a fight between Jaime Lannister and *300*'s Leonidas: "Jaime would have a chance. Gerard's character was a Greek hero and you don't mess with them, but Jaime would be able to suss out the situation, I hope. I think he would just call The Mountain. That's certainly what I'd do. That would be a nice twist."

Nice twists are precisely what *Game of Thrones* lives and dies by. All spoilers aside, you know that seemingly pivotal characters lose their heads, choke to death or find a crossbow bolt lodged in their gut without warning. Jaime's development has made him the show's pivotal character. It's the setbacks he's suffered that Coster-Waldau credits for making him such an interesting character to play and to watch.

"Jaime's 'oh shit' moment was great," he says. "He's always been known as the kingslayer for his abilities as a soldier, as a fighter. Once he lost that, he had to find the core of who he really is as a person. It was brilliant. This is a guy who has repeatedly tried to do the right thing, only for it to turn out to be terribly wrong."

Season five will undoubtedly bolster the show's position as the most powerful force on television. With the last novels still due from author George RR Martin, its reign over popular culture seems set to be a long one.

"But I think the show will finish before the book comes out," says Coster-Waldau. "You spend so much time comparing the show to the books and then, suddenly, it's going to be the other way around."

Whether Jaime will keep his head on his shoulders until then is up in the air. Whatever happens, you can be sure that Nikolaj Coster-Waldau will keep his feet firmly on the ground.

SESSION 02 GROWING STRONG

01

SQUAT

3 SETS OF 5-3-1 REPS
Stand with the bar resting on your back, your feet shoulder-width apart. Lower until your thighs are parallel to the floor.

02

AB WALKOUT

5 SETS OF 10 REPS
From a standing start, bend forward to place your hands on the floor. Walk them out in front of you to lower, then reverse the movement.

03

BOX JUMP

5 SETS OF 10 REPS
Set a box at hip height. Squat, then jump forcefully, landing with both feet on the box. Step down and repeat.

MUSCLE

LORD OF THE RINGS

FOR A SIX-PACK THAT POPS, RINGS REIGN SUPREME. AFTER TWO SHOULDER INJURIES, COSTER-WALDAU USES THEM TO BUILD STRENGTH WHILE IMPROVING HIS MOBILITY



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Taking the next step into a management role can be thrilling and unnerving at the same time. But if you arm yourself with the right knowledge – you're already halfway there.

1 KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Firstly, learn the business and get to know your team – taking note of how they work and what makes them tick. "Understanding the company culture and how it's positioned against its competitors is a great place to start," says SEEK HR Consultant Emma Whalan. "If you're already in the business, prepare yourself by getting to know your manager and their expectations."

2 BETTER LEADER = BETTER MANAGER

Being a good manager involves a lot of juggling. To be a successful manager, you must communicate effectively, inspire your team, delegate and allocate time and resources as efficiently as possible. You also need to make good decisions, often under time pressure. Self-awareness is key to effective leadership and Whalan says it's important to reflect on your performance on a regular basis.

3 TEAM BUILDING

Creating and maintaining genuine connections with your team is fundamental for a productive and harmonious work environment. Once you begin, schedule individual face-to-face catchups with each team member to discuss their responsibilities, goals, challenges and growth opportunities. Plus, don't forget to have fun with your team! The better you know them, the better you know how to keep them motivated.

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PLANCHE OUT FOR EXTRA STRENGTH

Mastering this gymnastic movement will build an Olympian upper body paired with the core stability of a trapeze artist

If your workout's beginning to feel stale, it's time to floor it. This party-stopping pose, called the planche, requires you to support your entire body weight with just your arms, while your core stabilisers work overtime to hold the position and prevent you from eating carpet. The intense strain on your chest, shoulders and triceps means your mirror muscles receive all the benefits of a bench press, with the added bonus of being able to perform this move from the (relative) comfort of your bedroom floor.

Sounds too easy, right? We knew you were thinking that. The leg extension turns up this move's difficulty level to elite. But nail this challenging pose and you'll see rapid improvements in your on-field and in-gym game, as well as your physique.

Expect to build washboard abs as you incinerate fat from your midsection, along with popping stabiliser muscles worthy of the world's best ring athletes. Just don't expect to ace the move with perfect-10 form on your first attempt.

1 DROP IT

To start, hit the deck in a push-up position, but turn your hands out at a 90° angle – this will help you balance when you stick this gravity-defying move.

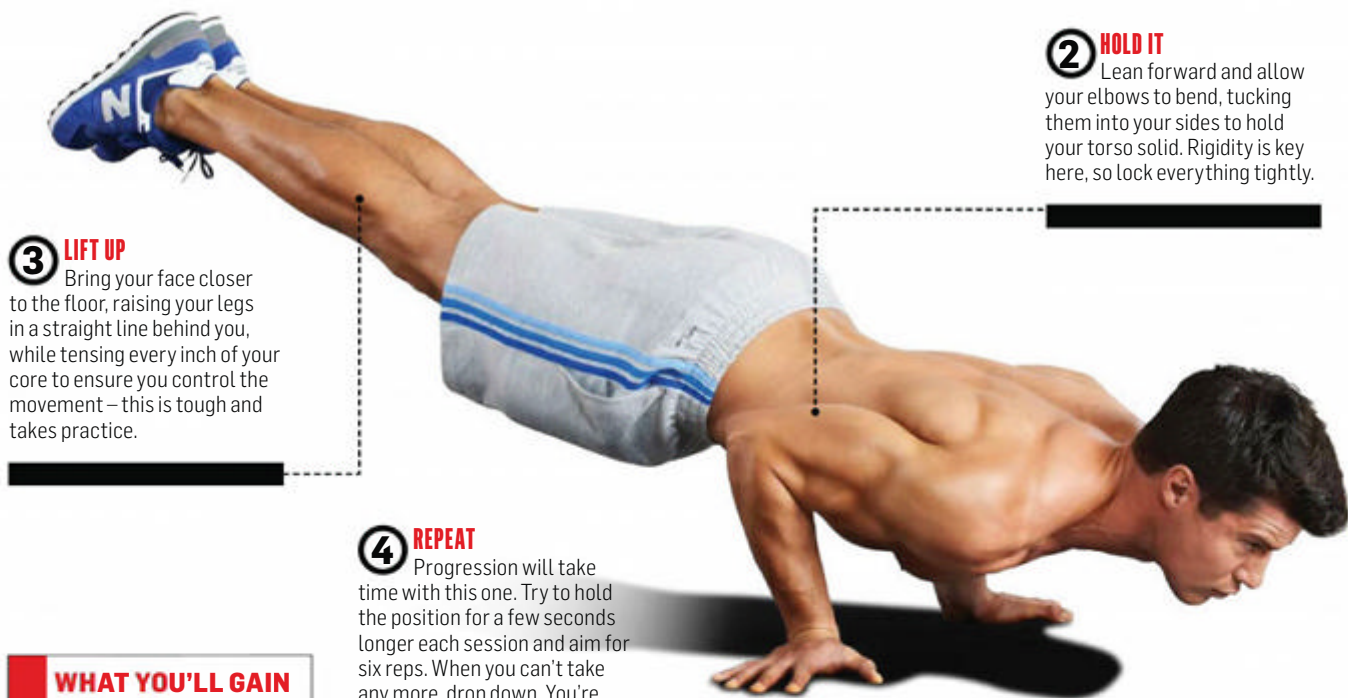


2 HOLD IT

Lean forward and allow your elbows to bend, tucking them into your sides to hold your torso solid. Rigidity is key here, so lock everything tightly.

3 LIFT UP

Bring your face closer to the floor, raising your legs in a straight line behind you, while tensing every inch of your core to ensure you control the movement – this is tough and takes practice.



4 REPEAT

Progression will take time with this one. Try to hold the position for a few seconds longer each session and aim for six reps. When you can't take any more, drop down. You're one pose closer to killer abs.



WHAT YOU'LL GAIN



A V-shaped upper body



Rock-solid core stability



The six-pack of a gymnast



An impressive party trick



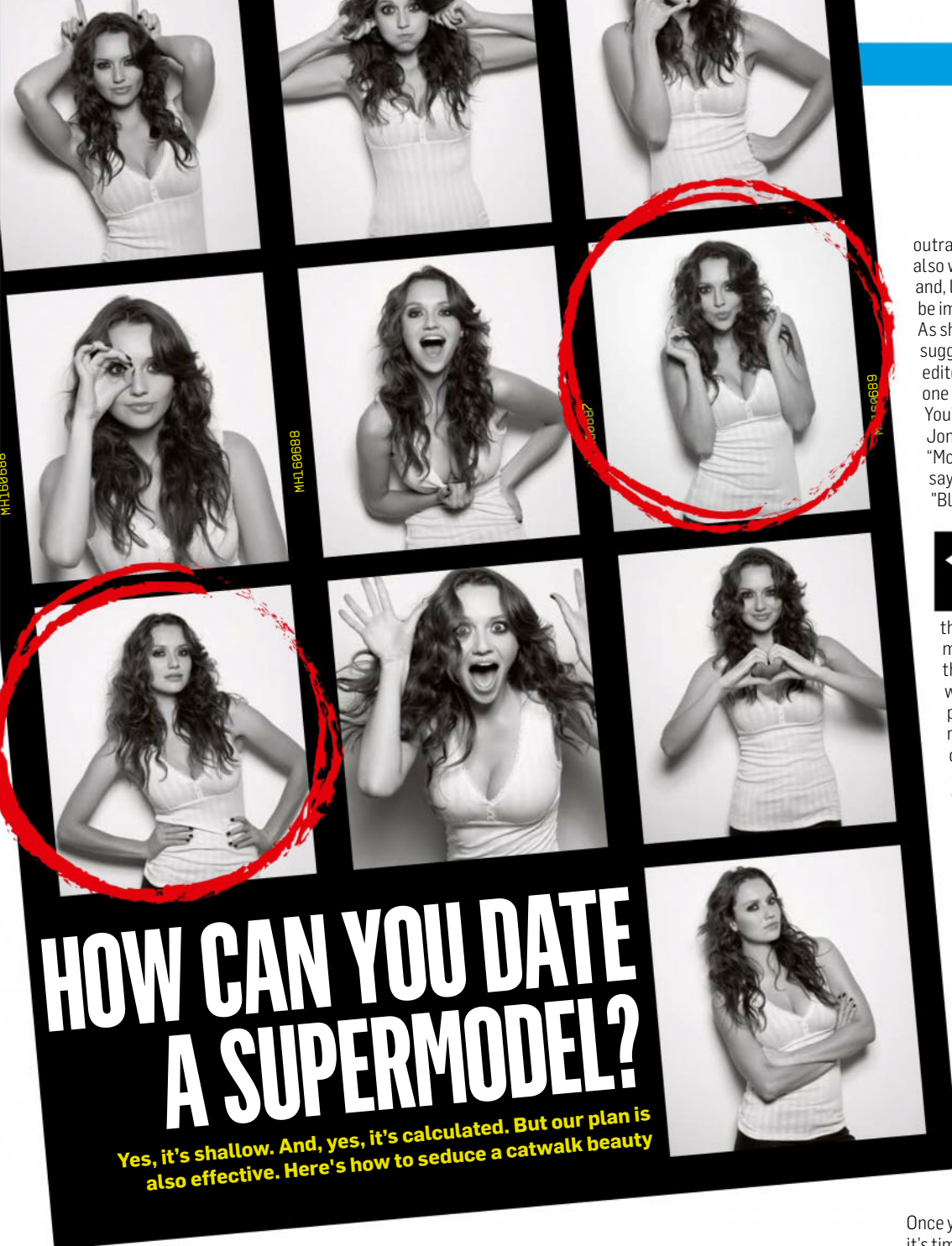
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HOW CAN YOU DATE A SUPERMODEL?

Yes, it's shallow. And, yes, it's calculated. But our plan is also effective. Here's how to seduce a catwalk beauty

Meeting a model is one thing – waking up next to her is something else.

Like climbing Everest, it's one of those fantasies you've probably labelled least likely to happen. But think about it: these women aren't robots. They like sex as much as you do. So what's stopping you becoming the guy who bagged the cover girl? Like scaling that mountain, it just requires thorough preparation and exacting execution

DON'T ASSUME THAT SHE'LL BE SHALLOW

It isn't about how *you* look. "A lot of models aren't with perfect, super-handsome guys," says *Sports Illustrated* model Jessica Perez. One girl's "not my type" is another's number-one. And don't assume she won't accept a drink, either. A model's career tends to be one of feast or famine, and many live pay cheque to pay cheque.

CHOOSE YOUR VENUE AND LOOK LIKE YOU BELONG THERE

Models know where to go to find the kind of guy they're after. These places tend to be crowded, offer views and sell

outrageously overpriced drinks. Models also work in locations around the world and, like any well-travelled woman, will be immersed in the latest drink trends. As should you be: "Order a negroni," suggests Kate Pass, bars and spirits editor on *Imbibe*. It's one part Campari, one part gin, one part sweet vermouth. You'll need to look like you fit in. Think Jon Hamm with a hint of Eric Bana. "Models always notice good shoes," says designer Sophie Cabourn. "Black leather brogues are ideal."

GET HER ATTENTION AND HOLD IT

The rules of initiating conversation are no different than with any other woman. "Every model I've ever worked with says they are the girl who no-one wanted to kiss," says clinical psychologist Dr Jay Watts. The most important thing is to have confidence, manners and a sense of being "good enough". A woman who's routinely praised for her looks isn't going to respond to "you're perfect". Ask her what she does for a living. Once you hear that magic "m" word, she's trying to impress you. Follow up fast with an intelligent question about the profession: "The best conversation starter I've heard is when a guy asked me what I intended to do when I couldn't model anymore," says model Laura Foster. "I hadn't thought about it. Then he gave me some really straight advice."

GAUGE HER INTEREST, THEN SEAL THE DEAL

Once you've bought her two drinks, it's time to make sure you're not in her friend zone. "Ask if she has a casting or shoot the next morning and see how she reacts," says Foster. "The fact that she's let you buy her drinks means you're further along the line than every other guy in the room." By this point, you'll know whether she's willing to leave with you. And if she does, prepare to be disappointed. "Models expect to be pleased," says film director Ryan Lucas, who has dated many. "Most of these women have never really had to try hard at anything – sex included." The next day, don't bother with games. If you want to see her again, say so. If she turns you down, don't worry: like scaling Everest, making it with a model is far easier the second time around.



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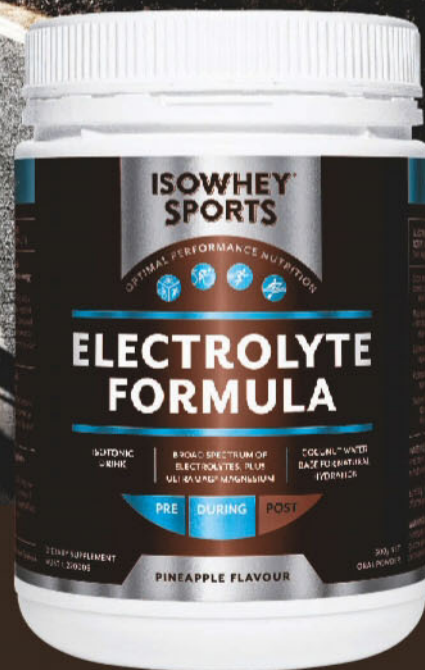
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YOU DON'T KNOW JACKED

Correct these five weightlifting mistakes to train smarter, recover faster and stack on serious size



TRAINERS LIKE TO SAY THAT THE most important part of any program is consistency. If you don't hit the gym regularly, you'll never see results. "But consistency can work both ways," says trainer BJ Gaddour. "Science is finding more and more habits that can slow your gains or halt them altogether – from how you monitor your recovery (if at all), to which muscles you focus on or ignore."

Indeed, it doesn't matter whether you're a weightlifting newbie or a seasoned ironworker – odds are your routine is peppered with missteps that are holding you back. In fact, we're willing to bet that the following five are among them. The more bad habits you eradicate, the faster your gains will be. In the gym, knowledge is more than just power – it's strength. →



1 YOU DON'T LISTEN TO YOUR HEART BEFORE YOU WORK OUT

Monitoring your heart rate during exercise is a smart way to gauge effort and optimise rest. But measuring your heart rate variability (HRV) between workouts can be even more effective for guiding training. "HRV is the fluctuation in time intervals between heartbeats, and it indicates your level of recovery," says trainer Bill Hartman. Low variability means you're still recovering; high variability means you're primed for action. "You can use where you are in that spectrum to fine-tune each workout," says Hartman.

DO THIS

Before you hit the gym, use an HRV tracker like the Polar RCX3 (\$319, polar.com/au-en/). You can use the data to determine whether you need to go harder, go easier, or skip the gym altogether, Hartman says.



2 YOU DON'T EAT ENOUGH

"Fitness-minded guys often undereat on purpose, thinking it will help uncover their abs," says nutritionist Dr Mike Roussell. "Or they unwittingly develop a kilojoule deficit while attempting to eat more healthfully." Either way, the result is the same: "Not eating enough slows your metabolism and makes it easier for you to overtrain because you don't have enough nutrients to fuel recovery," says Roussell.

DO THIS

"For two weeks, add 600-1250 kilojoules – the equivalent of a handful of almonds or a protein bar – to your daily diet," says Roussell. "After two weeks, add another 600 or so kilojoules a day and stay there." The gradual increase will help you gain muscle – especially if the bulk of the additional kilojoules comes from protein-rich sources. (Thirty grams with each meal is ideal, say researchers at the University of Texas.) Roussell also recommends buying a set of scales that measure body fat. "If your body fat increases by a percentage point, calculate your current kilojoule intake, using any of a number of smartphone apps, and remain at that level – don't add any more kilojoules to your diet," says Roussell.



3 YOU IGNORE YOUR GLUTES

Strong glutes are useful for more than just filling out a pair of jeans; they're the strongest link in your body's posterior chain, the string of muscles running from your hamstrings to your spinal erectors. This vital collection of muscles drives acceleration and generates explosive power. "Deadlifts and squats activate your glutes indirectly," says Bret Contreras, author of *Bodyweight Strength Training Anatomy*. "But doing exercises that target those muscles directly will hit them more thoroughly, helping you crush more kilojoules and boost total-body power." And that, in turn, will translate to greater strength and performance both inside the gym and beyond it.

DO THIS

Recent research by Contreras found that the hip thrust activates the glute muscles to a greater degree than any other lower-body move. "You're not limited by the strength of other muscles as you are with squats and deadlifts, so you can use more weight," says Contreras. "Plus, your glutes are under constant tension, maximising their growth stimulus." To do the move, rest your shoulders on a bench and place a weighted barbell across your hips. Lower your bum to the floor, then drive back to the start position.



4 YOU SKIP CARDIO

Hang around the squat rack long enough and you'll hear blokes talking about the "interference effect" – a bro-science term referring to cardio's supposed inhibitory influence on muscle building. Ignore these guys; the weight of scientific evidence suggests otherwise. Indeed, a recent study in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* found that cycling for 45 minutes in addition to resistance training resulted in a 14 per cent increase in leg-muscle volume. Doing strength training alone – without cardio – resulted in a gain of only nine per cent.

DO THIS

Follow those cyclists! Three or four times a week, either a few hours before a strength session or on a separate day, do at least 30 minutes of moderate- to high-intensity cardio on a track, treadmill, rower or exercise bike. "That will jack up your muscle-building hormones," says Dr Matt Harber, an associate professor of kinesiology at Taylor University who studies the effect of cardio activity on muscle size. "Aerobic exercise activates growth pathways in the muscle about as much as resistance exercise does, and doing both types of exercise – separated by a few hours – appears to have an additive effect on muscle growth," says Harber.

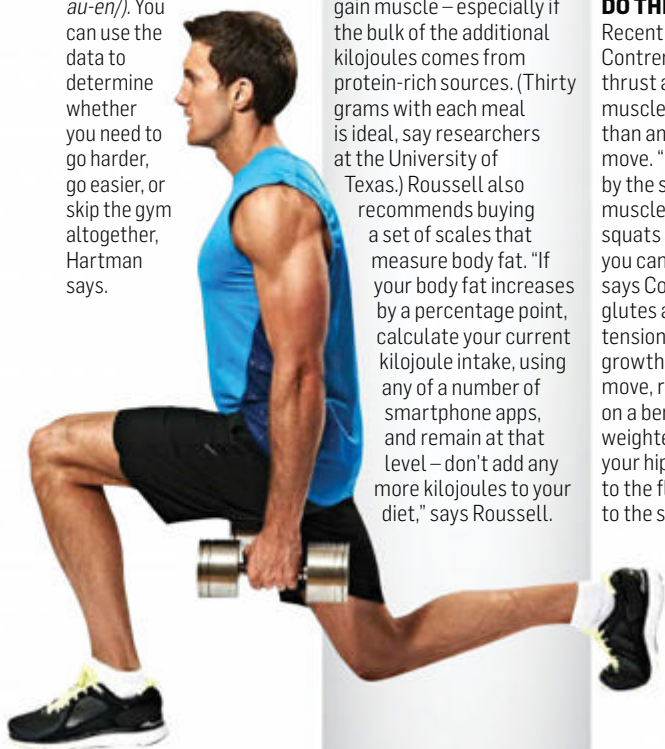


5 YOU IMPROVISE

Men who follow fitness programs, whether with a trainer or from a book or magazine, often tinker with what's being prescribed. "Guys just can't seem to help themselves," says trainer Dan John, author of *Mass Made Simple*. "They add more sets or exercises, they hop over to another program when they don't see results in a week or two, or they do additional workouts on days they should be resting." Trainers call it "exercise ADD," and the result is often a training plateau. "Improvising exercises or doing extra sets or workouts can leave you too exhausted to succeed with the program at hand," says John. "It's the primary reason why so many guys never progress."

DO THIS

Stay the course. "Most programs last about six weeks – and the key to success is making it all the way to that sixth week," says John. Follow the program with a friend, or make sure an incentive or goal is waiting for you at the end – even if that goal is little more than an "after" selfie. Bored with a particular move? Ask a trainer to show you a different exercise that replicates the same movement pattern.



"MOST PROGRAMS LAST ABOUT SIX WEEKS – AND THE KEY TO SUCCESS IS MAKING IT ALL THE WAY TO THAT SIXTH WEEK"

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ONE-NIGHT STANZA

What can a bunch of long-dead poets tell you about picking up on Tinder? Well, these lines might just put the "couple" in "couplet"

01

GO IN STRONG

By John Donne

*"Why should we rise
because 'tis light?
Did we lie down
because
T'was night?"*

BREAK OF DAY, 1612

The 2015 Redux

If you were in my bed, nothing would ever make me leave it.

The Tinder Verdict

"Sexual chat-up lines are polarising," says personality psychologist Dr Jeremy Nicholson. "So be prepared for rejection." You don't need science to tell you women will be more receptive to this on a Saturday night than 3pm Monday (unless it's a very slow day at work). And it will narrow your search, too – studies at Florida State University show women with "risk-taker" personality types respond best to sexual compliments.



02

PLAY IT COOL

By Walt Whitman

*"Passing stranger!
You do not know
how longingly
I look upon you . . .
I have somewhere
surely lived a life of
joy with you"*

TO A STRANGER,
1867

The 2015 Redux

I can't believe we've only just been matched. Maybe we knew each other in a previous life?

The Tinder Verdict

A surprising number of people are into spiritual ideas, says online dating expert James Preece, so there's a chance this line could work. A University of Louisville study found women prefer innocuous lines to "cute" ones, so make it sound throwaway.



03

BAG A BOLD ONE

By Robert Herrick

*"A sweet disorder
in the dress
Kindles in clothes
a wantonness"*

DELIGHT IN DISORDER,
1648

The 2015 Redux

I really like your kooky dress sense – it's very sexy.

The Tinder Verdict

"Flirty lines work well to attract more outgoing women," says Nicholson. Confident people will be more receptive to the kind of result you want from Tinder, too. "Plus, she's likely to have taken care picking her photo, so will appreciate that you've noticed," adds Preece.



04

ACT ALL NEEDY

By Matthew Arnold

*"Come to me in my
dreams, and then
By day I shall be
well again!
For so the night will
more than pay
The hopeless longing
of the day"*

LONGING, 1852

The 2015 Redux

Stand me up in my dreams tonight and I don't think I'll make it through tomorrow.

The Tinder Verdict

"Good openers say something positive about a man's value as a mate," says Nicholson. "This shouts desperation." Best upgrade your profile pic: the *Journal of Social Psychology* found many women will consider a quick fling with men they find attractive, regardless of patter.



05

TEASE HER

By Percy Bysshe Shelley

*"Nothing in the
world is single
All things by a
law divine
In one another's
being mingle
Why not I
with thine?"*

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY,
1820

The 2015 Redux

It defies nature that one as beautiful as you should be single. So how about we meet up and work on that?

The Tinder Verdict

While a study in *Social Psychology* found that women perceive men who use silly or playful pick-up lines as more sociable and confident, these men were also seen as less trustworthy and intelligent. The former traits might increase your odds of sex, but the latter prevent a relationship from forming.



CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE



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* Whichever occurs first, for eligible customers; excludes accessories and trays.

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A black and white photograph of a person wearing a hoodie, crouching on a track and tying their shoelaces. The person is looking down at their feet. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a track or outdoor setting.

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LIVE WELL

THE 14 BEST WAYS TO EAT AN EGG

You know they're nutritious.
Now make them delicious

WHEN I WAS A BOY IN THE SEVENTIES, eggs were condemned because they contained cholesterol. They were landmines studding the path to health; they caused heart attacks and misery. But somehow I never got the message. When I was 10, I discovered that a frittata was a simple, delicious after-school meal. And unlike those Pop-Tarts I'd been gobbling, the frittata made me feel good. We now know that eggs aren't evil. In fact, they contain everything required to sustain life, crammed as they are with amino acids and vitamins. But we eat them the same boring ways. Time to scramble your routine.

01

POACHED IN TOMATO SAUCE

When making a spaghetti sauce like bolognese, crack some eggs (one for each serving) into the simmering sauce and cover the pan with a lid. When the whites are set but the yolks are still runny, top each person's plate of pasta with some sauce and an egg, and serve.



02

BAKED

Put 1 tbsp of butter in an ovenproof bowl and nuke for 30 seconds. Crack in two eggs, grate some fresh parmesan on top, and bake at 160°C until the whites set; about 15 minutes. Vary the dish by adding other ingredients, such as cooked bacon or sausage, grated cheese, wilted spinach or roasted red capsicum.



03

FRIED-EGG SANDWICH

Melt butter in a medium-hot pan. Add two eggs, yolks broken. Cook until the whites set; one minute. Flip, then cook for 30 seconds. Eat on multigrain with mayo.

04

HARD-BOILED, STRAIGHT UP

Add a layer of eggs to a pot. Cover with water. Bring to boil, turn off the heat and cover. Wait 15 minutes. Plunge eggs into an ice bath. Peel. Salt. Eat.

05

AGGRESSIVELY FRIED

In a stainless-steel pan, heat half a centimetre of oil on high. When it smokes, add two eggs. Cover; cook till the edges crisp. Serve on a ham and cheese sandwich.



OUR EXPERT
MICHAEL RUHLMAN IS THE AUTHOR OF NUMEROUS COOKBOOKS, INCLUDING *THE MAKING OF A CHEF*, *THE ELEMENTS OF COOKING AND EGG*. HIS GO-TO TIP: "EGGS ALWAYS NEED TO BE SEASONED WITH SALT."

06

IN THE BEST EGG SALAD

Chop 3-4 hard-boiled eggs. Add mayo, some chopped celery, minced Spanish onion and 1 tbsp chopped tarragon. Serve on lettuce with a toasted baguette. For a change-up, swap the tarragon for 1 tsp curry powder and a pinch of cayenne pepper.

07

FOR DESSERT, AS CUSTARD

Add two eggs to a measuring cup – note the volume. Add an equal amount of skim milk. Add ¼ tsp vanilla essence, ½ tsp sugar and a pinch of salt. Blend. Divide between two oven-proof bowls, cover with foil and steam until firm; 15 minutes. Eat warm. →





08

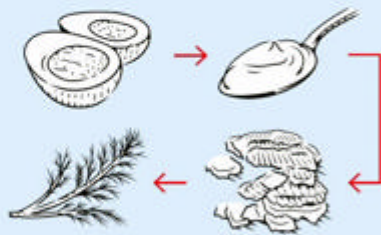
TO PUT HAIR ON YOUR CHEST

To make an incredible whiskey sour, combine four egg whites in a blender along with 240ml of bourbon, 4 tbsp lemon juice, 1 tbsp lime juice and 4 tbsp simple syrup (one part water to one part sugar). Blend until frothy.



09 FRITTATA, ANY WAY YOU WISH

Preheat the grill. In an ovenproof non-stick pan, cook your add-ins (potatoes, chorizo, spinach) until done. Add whisked eggs (two per person) and grill until the top sets; 2-3 minutes. Upend onto a cutting board, slice and serve with avocado.

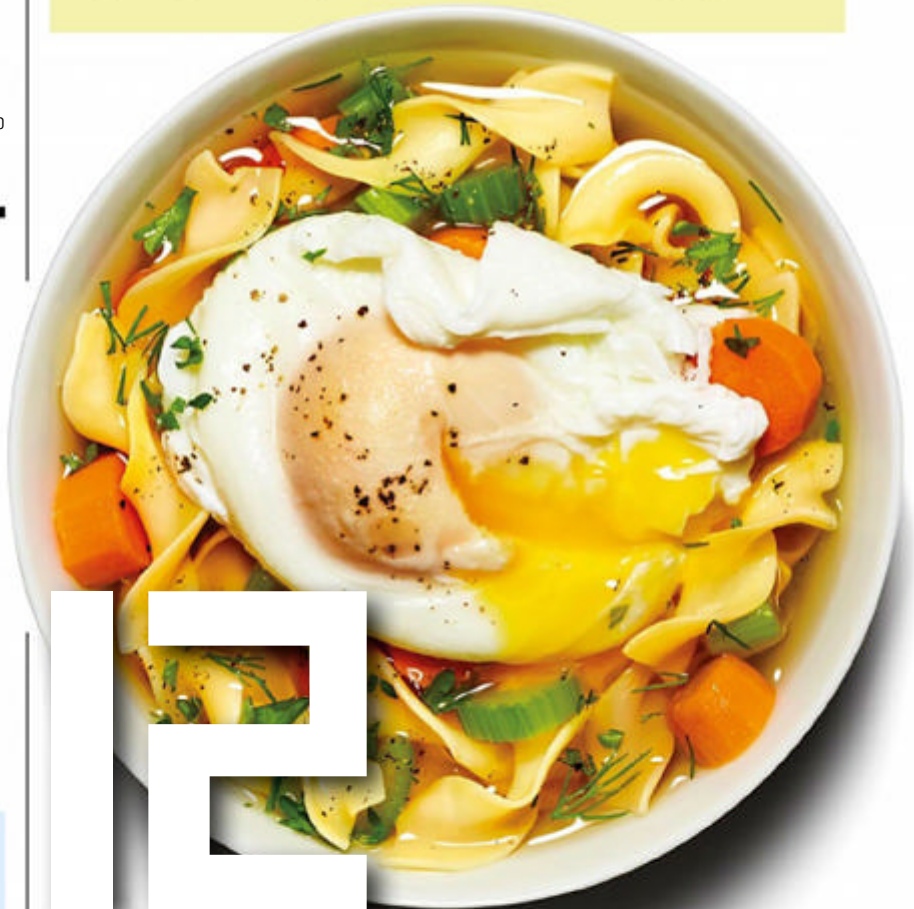


10 LAZY MAN'S DEVILED EGGS

Halve a hard-boiled egg, then top the halves with sour cream, smoked salmon and dill. Or try mayo, mustard and ground cayenne pepper for a combo with some punch.

11 EGGY CHEESE PUFFS

In a pot, boil one cup of lightly salted water and one stick of butter. Drop heat to medium, add one cup of flour and mix until paste-like. Remove from heat and beat in four eggs, one at a time. Stir in a little grated gruyere cheese. Add to a zip-top bag, snip off a corner, and pipe portions onto a baking sheet. Bake at 200°C until puffed; 30-40 minutes.



12

PERFECTLY POACHED

Bring a pan of water to a boil and turn the heat to low. Carefully crack an egg into a slotted spoon to let some of the white drain. Lower the egg into the water. When the white sets (2-3 minutes) the egg is done. Add to chicken noodle soup, Caesar salad or roasted asparagus.

13 EASY FRESH PASTA

Combine eggs and flour (two eggs per cup). Knead your dough until smooth, then roll it out thin. Cut into strips and boil in salted water.

14 SCRAMBLED IN THAT FRESH PASTA

Mix two egg yolks and 2 tbsp light cream. In a pan, cook two chopped bacon strips. Remove it from the heat, add the hot pasta, and toss with the egg.

The Little Things

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milk & Co

**HOLLYWOOD
HARD MEN**

Comedians like Ferrell might need help on the inside. These actors were hard from the womb

**1****JASON STATHAM:
HARD TO STOP**

If Statham says he'll deliver a package (*The Transporter*), he'll deliver said package. He'll also deliver roundhouse kicks in a well-cut suit.

**2****DANNY TREJO:
HARD TO BEAT**

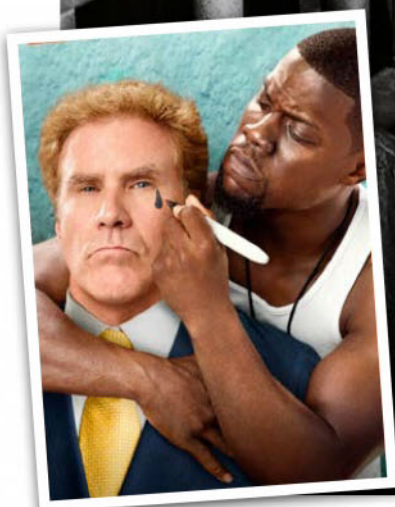
The *Machete* star was a Pennsylvania State prison boxing champ in both lightweight and welterweight divisions.

**3****CHARLES BRONSON:
HARD TO KILL**

Bronson made a career as a vigilante, starring in *Death Wish*, *The Magnificent Seven* and *The Dirty Dozen*.

**4****CHUCK NORRIS:
HARD TO BELIEVE**

The king of internet memes – Norris is so hard he destroyed the periodic table because he only recognises the element of surprise.

**THE
HIGH
FIVE****TOUGHEN UP**

Will Ferrell's latest flick *Get Hard* (in cinemas March 26) sees the comedian prepping for a stint in the big house. Facing your own hard time? Heed these tips from James Phelps, author of *Australia's Hardest Prison: Inside The Walls Of Long Bay Jail*

1. GET UGLY

Prison ain't no place for pretty boys, says Phelps. "Shave your head, grow a mullet or lose some teeth," he recommends. If you don't, someone inside will most likely give you some plastic surgery free of charge.

**2. HIT THE
WEIGHTS**

"There's a fair chance you'll get stood over," says Phelps. "They'll try to make you a courier or demand cash from outside. How you fight back will determine your place in the hierarchy going forward."

**3. HAVE A
STRATEGY**

You need to find a group to hang with fast, says Phelps. This will mostly break down along racial lines. If that's not an option, "buddy up to a hard head who will have your back".

**4. ASK FOR
PROTECTION**

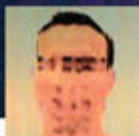
If you're considered vulnerable you can be put in a sectioned-off area, separate from other prisoners, says Phelps. But if you're ever removed you'll be known as a "dog" and targeted accordingly, he warns.

**5. MIND YOUR
MANNERS**

Be polite to the screws, Phelps recommends. "If you're a smartarse, they can put you in a cell with two or even four blokes. But if you're nice they might put you in a single cell where you'll be safer."

EAR OF THE TIGER

Looking to escape the horror of a Tabata or CrossFit workout? Spotify's expert on music for exercise, Dr Costas Karageorghis, has designed playlists to make even the most punishing workouts more manageable. Tune in to drown the torture out.



TABATA TUNES

1. **Everything Is Everything**
– Gabriel Garzón-Montano (BPM of 86)
2. **Figure It Out**
– Royal Blood (108 BPM)
3. **Wrapped Up**
– Olly Murs ft. Tracie McCoy (122 BPM)
4. **Won't Look Back**
– Duke Dumont (124 BPM)
5. **Time Of Our Lives**
– Pitbull & Ne-Yo (124 BPM)
6. **The Night Is Still Young**
– Nicki Minaj (128 BPM)
7. **Will Never Let You Down**
– Rita Ora (128 BPM)
8. **Break Free**
– Ariana Grande ft. Zedd (130 BPM)
9. **All About That Bass**
– Meghan Trainor (134 BPM)
10. **Sugah Daddy**
– D'Angelo & The Vanguard (93 BPM)

With an average tempo of 118 BPM, this playlist includes affirmations such as "I don't ever want to give up" and "I'm stronger than I've been before", says Karageorghis. Avoid singing these out loud.

GYMNASTICS STRENGTH TRAINING TUNES

1. **Good Kisser**
– Usher (BPM of 98)
2. **Ghost**
– Ella Henderson (105 BPM)
3. **My Love**
– Route 94 ft. Jess Glynne (120 BPM)
4. **Come Get It Bae**
– Pharrell Williams (120 BPM)
5. **Go All Night**
– Gorgon City ft. Jennifer Hudson (121 BPM)
6. **Pushing On**
– Oliver \$ & Jimi Jules (122 BPM)
7. **Gecko**
– Oliver Heldens & Becky Hill (125 BPM)
8. **When A Fire Starts To Burn**
– Disclosure (124 BPM)
9. **Funknroll**
– Prince (98 BPM)
10. **Stay With Me**
– Sam Smith (85 BPM)


A mid-tempo feel reflects the slow, steady movements and isometric contractions of moves like the iron cross or the handstand, says Karageorghis. You know, the easy stuff.



CROSSFIT TUNES

1. **Don't**
– Ed Sheeran (BPM of 96)
2. **It's My Birthday**
– Will. I. Am. ft. Cody Wise (101 BPM)
3. **Fun**
– Pitbull ft. Chris Brown (114 BPM)
4. **Waves**
– Mr Probz (120 BPM)
5. **Rather Be**
– Clean Bandit ft. Jess Glynne (121 BPM)
6. **I Wanna Feel**
– Second City (122 BPM)
7. **My Head Is A Jungle (MK Remix)**
– Wankelmut & Emma Louise (124 BPM)
8. **La La La**
– Naughty Boy ft. Sam Smith (125 BPM)
9. **Art Official Cage**
– Prince (130 BPM)
10. **Thinking Out Loud**
– Ed Sheeran (79 BPM)

Avoid playing too loud. CrossFit movements rely on an internal sense of rhythm and on listening to the instructions of your trainer, says Karageorghis. Hear that, champ?


GOT SPOTIFY?
Visit menshealth.au to hear the playlists

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DAVID POCOCK

Wallabies and ACT Brumbies Openside Flanker

"The supplement industry is a bit of a minefield as it's hard to get past all the hype and marketing and find what works without all the unnecessary ingredients that are in many products. Over the years I've become more concerned about what I am putting into my body and have looked high and low for a brand that provides genuinely healthy, ethical and effective supplements.

Professional Whey offers exactly that – an Australian owned and run sports nutrition company with products that stand out from the crowd. Professional Whey is deeply concerned about the quality of ingredients that they are using and where they are sourced. Professional Whey helps me achieve my rugby goals without compromising my health or my values of clean, wholesome nutrition.

Their whole business ethos reflects that. Their products support a range of goals and are a sports nutrition brand that genuinely cares about the health of its customers."

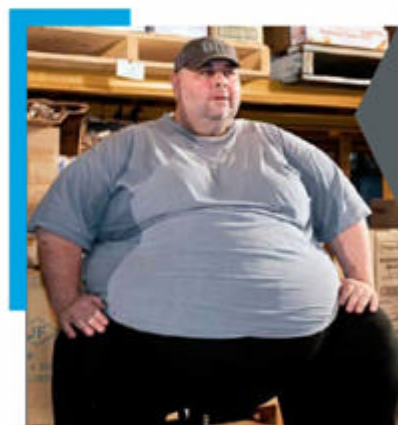
Professional Whey is proud to be Australia's cleanest, most ethical and socially responsible sports nutrition brand that bridges the gap between sports nutrition and wholefoods.



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"Tiles would crack under my feet"

Life-threatening habits put Jordan Tirekidis's frame into the gargantuan category. Here's how he pulled off one of the all-time great downsizings



WEIGHT BEFORE

320kg

WEIGHT AFTER

102kg

GUTLESS WONDER

NAME: Jordan Tirekidis

AGE: 46

LIVES: Sydney

HEIGHT: 196cm

I had to make changes. Anxiety attacks, bouts of depression and forebodings of a heart attack were all part of my daily life. The tiles in shops would crack under my feet. I was even told by a hospital that their obesity clinic couldn't help me.

The Gain

Aged 10, after having my tonsils removed and spending a week on a diet of ice-cream and lemonade, I developed a sweet tooth that was the beginning of my weight gain. By the time I was 17, I tipped the scales at 146 kilograms. Looking back, I was overweight but very strong. I was going to the gym and lifting big weights: I could squat five reps of 220kg. But as 13-hour days spent running the family business took over my life, gym sessions gave way to gorging sessions. For breakfast, I was eating 20 hash browns, four McMuffins and two large coffees. Lunch was no better, with two Quarter Pounders, two Big Macs, drinks, fries and two sundaes my go-to meal. I'd then binge again for dinner, usually on pizza after having already eaten at my parents'. By the time I was 44, I wore 12XL shirts and weighed a deadly 320kg.

The Change

Enough was enough. I sold the family business, the bane of my existence, and joined a health retreat. The first target was my diet. I eliminated starchy carbs and sugar. Breakfast became an egg-white omelette with mushroom, onion and tomato, while lunch and dinner were usually salads with lean meat. The results were stunning: I was losing 9kg a week. At the retreat, I set up two chairs 25 metres apart and began walking laps between them. Six months later, I'd dropped 140kg and was light enough to use cardio machines, like the cross-trainer and rower, doing intervals for up to half an hour.

The Result

I wouldn't blame you if you thought I was an entirely different person. Weighing in 218kg lighter, I feel like a new man. I've never enjoyed being the centre of attention, but I've come out of my shell. It's a bit of a cliché, but if I can do it, anyone can. I've now incorporated CrossFit, boxing, tabata and weights into my training, with the aim of stacking on 20kg of muscle this year. Knowing I can now fit into a plane seat, I plan on travelling for a while. I have a new lease on life and don't want to waste another minute.



The Advice

Find experts to help you. It's all well and good having a strong work ethic, but you should never underestimate the power of having to answer to someone else. It's an incredible motivating force. And keep at it. We're all human; we all make mistakes. So when you slip up, work harder the next day and keep at it for the rest of the week.



Lost the lard? Tell us how by logging onto yahoo7.com.au/menshealthand clicking on "Gutless Wonders". Next month's winner will receive a pair of Asics Gel-3030 running shoes valued at \$230.

218_{kg} =

THE AMOUNT OF WEIGHT JORDAN LOST



1 X PIANO

=



1 X YOUNG ELEPHANT

=



4½ X KYLIE MINOGUES

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"I WAS MISSING THE POINT OF LIFE"

It took a brush with death for this workaholic to see he had everything upside down

BY BEN BLOOMFIELD

Aged 33, 10-foot-tall and bulletproof, I was climbing the corporate ladder. That was my life. From the moment I left university I had just one ambition: to be a partner at a global consulting firm by the age of 35. To that end, I'd leave home at seven in the morning and return 12 hours later. I might spend 15 minutes a day with my children – a four-year-old son and twin one-year-old girls. I'd tell myself I was doing it for them, that I was toiling away in order to set them up for a better life. Really, though, it was for my ego. Nothing else.

I left for work one Monday morning still seething from an argument with my wife the day before. I was full of indignation and stubbornness, but I also had a pain in my chest – a pain I'd never experienced before. On the train I googled "heart-attack symptoms". Nothing I read was reassuring. But I kept going because I needed to close a deal at work.

The symptoms worsened over the next three hours, my heart racing in waves every few minutes. I tidied my desk and headed for the train, calling my wife to tell her I was unwell and that I was sorry. But I made it only about 100 metres before it all became too much. Sweat dripping off me, my heart beating so hard I thought it would explode, I felt close to fainting. I hung up on my wife and dialed 000.

Bundled into an ambulance, I watched as three paramedics attached me to an ECG machine, which recorded my heart rate at 220 beats per minute (and rising). In that moment my ambition meant nothing. I was alone and convinced I would die.

"Just breathe – breathe, mate. It's okay," one of the paramedics said. "We have it back under control. Your heart rate's down. You've had an episode of SVT (supraventricular tachycardia). You have a cardiac arrhythmia. The boys will take you to hospital."

Doctors laid out my three options for treating a condition that can trigger cardiac arrest or stroke and affects roughly two per cent of men: do nothing, go on medication for the rest of my life, or undergo a surgical procedure that had a 90 per cent chance of success. I would have my life back in two weeks, they said. I told them to scrub up. Except the procedure failed. How could I be the anomaly?

A further 10 weeks passed, including two more failed procedures, each one upping the risk of my heart checking out for good. One day, glancing at my Polar tracker, the numbers told the story:

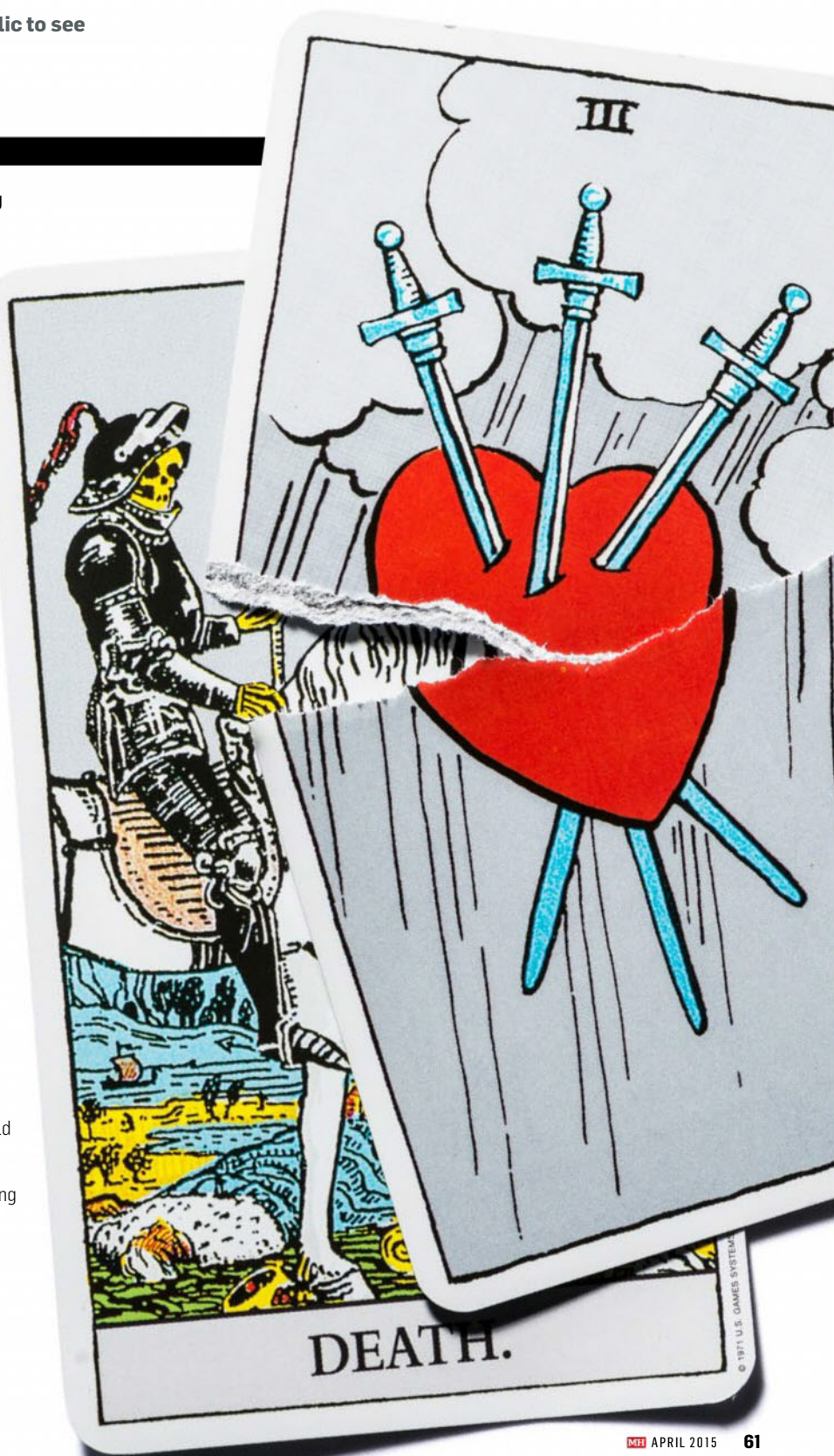
Time elapsed: 56min 38sec

Average heart rate: 131 BPM

Maximum heart rate: 238 BPM

Kilojoules burned: 1944

Distance travelled: 0 metres →



The atrium chamber in my heart was caught in a vicious cycle, rogue electrical signals firing while my ventricles madly tried to keep pace. Amid one episode, a doctor told me she needed to administer the drug adenosine to slow my heart: "It's like impending doom," she warned. I felt my heart stop, the blood in my body pause. I could hear people's voices as the breath left my body. I figured I was dying. But then it was back – the frenetic beat of my faulty heart.

My condition drove me to depression. I was shit-scared to go to sleep, convinced I wouldn't wake in the morning. When out of bed I did nothing, taking up space in the house, useless to my wife and children. An obsessive-compulsive disorder manifested, which had me checking my pulse every 20 seconds. Once vibrant and opinionated, I was now gaunt; a shell of a man.

At last I hit a tipping point. On Mother's Day 2013, I woke up and didn't give a damn, ignoring my wife, gazing at the ceiling. Late in the evening she stared at me, tears rolling down her face. She wasn't crying for me but for herself. I'd broken her. I picked up the phone and rang for help.

The psychologist broke me down and reassembled me. I came to acknowledge that I wasn't going to die, that I could live again. We spoke about spirituality, reflection, meditation, verbalisation

– things I once dismissed as bullshit. While we met only a few times, our consultations taught me that we all have shit going on, we all have problems – some more serious than others – but it's what you do next that defines you.

From that point forward, my life became less about my condition and more about breaking rusted-on habits and forming new ones. Hear this: you don't need to wait for a crisis before realigning your thinking. Get in first! I began meditating twice daily, repeating my mantra: "I will be fit and healthy". I focused on what I'd achieved the day before, what I would achieve today, and looked forward to tomorrow.

Having identified salt and even mild dehydration as triggers for my racing heart, I binned my old ways of eating and went on a semi-strict Mediterranean diet. I aimed for a minimum of 10,000 steps a day and got serious about sleep. I built a trusted team of go-to people for the bad days: my wife, my father, my mate, my doctor and my cardiologist. I focused my energy on the people I loved most, my family and friends, while divorcing myself from those who didn't add value to my life.

The episodes of abnormal heart rhythm would continue for 18 months. Just after my 35th birthday, I played the final hand. I chose to have a procedure called an AV node ablation – killing a healthy part of my heart for the greater

good. No turning back. A pacemaker would replace the natural electrical system. It would take over 100 per cent of the work.

Six months on, my heart's back to normal. My OCD is gone, too. I've changed my life in ways I never thought possible. I'm as fit as I've been in the past 10 years

HEAR THIS: YOU DON'T NEED TO WAIT FOR A CRISIS BEFORE REALIGNING YOUR THINKING. GET IN FIRST!

and work out daily. I ditched my job (and misguided ambition) and picked up a new role, cutting my hours by a third. I now spend a minimum of two hours a day with my kids. But most importantly, I will never go to bed angry – a lesson I learnt on that day in early 2013. Had I croaked that day, the final memory my wife would have had of me was an angry dickhead storming out the front door. Please, don't ever let that happen to you.

Ben Bloomfield is a director for Paceline (paceline.org.au), a charity focused on curing cardiac arrhythmia, and author of *Never Go To Bed Angry – The Road to Mental and Physical Wellbeing* (nevergotobedangry.net).



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Matt Aboud – age 28
World Champion Australian Swimmer

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(brookstone.com; US\$49.99)

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FOR THE WINE AFFICIONADO VINTEC WINE CABINETS ▶

(vintec.com.au)

Sure, you could stick your whites in with the soggy lettuce and your reds under the bed. Alternatively, you could mark yourself out as a man of distinction and fork out for a wine cabinet. Not only will you eliminate the temperature variations that spoil wines, but you'll also protect your stash from UV light and ensure any corks (yes, they still exist) don't dry out. Choose a dual- or multi-zone cabinet and both your whites and reds will always be at the perfect drinking temperature. We suggest checking out the range from Vintec – if they're good enough for the doyen of Australian wine writing, James Halliday, they'll surely be good enough for whatever you've grabbed from the local bottle.



AIRFLO BORDEAUX WINE AERATOR ▶ (harveynorman.com.au; \$19.95)

A good wine deserves to be decanted to breathe awhile before being savoured. But what kind of *MH* man about town has time for that? Get to the good part faster by pouring your pinot through this wine aerator. By infusing it with oxygen as it leaves the bottle, you'll enhance the wine's flavours and aromas straight from the bat, leaving you more time to plan world domination. Or decide what pizza to order.



FOR THE BEER BARON CORKCICLE CHILLSNER BEER CHILLER (top3.com.au; \$40 for two)

A hot day deserves a cold beer. Make sure your brew of choice remains chilled to the last drop with the Chillsner beer chiller. Simply freeze the cooling-gel-filled, stainless-steel lance for 45 minutes, then insert into your beer bottle and press to create an airtight seal. Now raise your beer to your waiting lips and allow the four flow vents to deliver that chilled amber nectar straight into your mouth. If only everything in life was so simple.



◀ GROWLTAP (growltap.com; US\$38)

Craft brewers popping up everywhere: great. Being able to buy a growler of foamy suds from said craft beer purveyors: even better. Those suds losing their fizz before you've guzzled down a full 1.89 litres of beer: enough to make Homer Simpson cry. Enter the GrowlTap, which turns your growler into a fully portable handheld keg and tap that, courtesy of an attached CO₂ cylinder, pumps out fresh, carbonated beer long after you've got home from the brewery.



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CHC: 70319-12/14



SEIZE CONTROL OF YOUR CHECK-UP

It's time to make your annual expedition to the GP really pay dividends

BY PAIGE FOWLER

ILLUSTRATION BY IGOR MORSKI

REMEMBER WHEN DOCTORS made house calls? No? How about when they wore those round reflectors on their heads? Not that either? Then how about when they'd bug you to come in for a check-up that involved diagnostic scrotum holding? Oh, right. They're still doing that. As important as regular check-ups are, there are plenty of ways you can stay on top of your health before you step into your GP's waiting room. Be your own doc and take these five vital tests.

FIND YOUR ABSI, LOSE YOUR GUT

As a window into your overall health, the digits on the doctor's scale won't tell you much. And your BMI? It's a broad indicator of healthy weight at best. Enter the ABSI ("a body shape index"). A 2014 study in the journal *PLOS One* found that people with the highest ABSIs had a 61 per cent higher risk of dying over the 24-year follow-up period than those with the lowest – even if their BMIs were normal. Unlike the BMI, the ABSI factors in your waist circumference – and that's key. "A lot of inflammation in the body is derived from fat tissue in the belly," says Topol.

THE TEST Enter your measurements and age into the ABSI calculator at absi-calculator.com. If your number is one, your risk of premature death is average.

YOUR MOVE If your ABSI is above one, start whittling your waist by doing high-intensity interval training (HIIT). In a 2012 study at the Montreal Heart Institute, people who exercised 2-3 times a week using HIIT trimmed more than five centimetres from their waist circumference after nine months. →



BARE ARMS FOR YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

You shouldn't half-arse a health check, but some doctors do just that with your blood-pressure reading. You need to cuff both arms, according to research in the *American Journal of Medicine*. Scientists found that when a person's systolic pressure varies by 10 or more points between arms, the risk of heart attack or stroke shoots up by 38 per cent. A large difference between arms could be a sign of peripheral artery disease, which means your arteries are clogged with plaque.

THE TEST Before rolling up your sleeves, make sure the cuff on the blood-pressure monitor can cover a third of your upper arm, says Dr Robert Wergin, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians. Less coverage can throw off your readings. Now measure both arms, making sure both feet are planted on the floor.

YOUR MOVE Take the pressure off with probiotics. These good bacteria, found in yoghurt, can help lower your blood pressure. A Griffith University study review found that consuming probiotics lowered systolic and diastolic readings by an average of 3.6 and 2.4 points, respectively. If your blood pressure is 140/90 or higher, see a doctor, pronto.

STRIP DOWN TO PROTECT YOUR SKIN

Your doc may ask you to drop your drawers, but it's rare for men to bare all at a check-up – and that's a problem. A full-body exam is best for catching skin cancer, and most men are unlikely to schedule a screening with a dermatologist, according to skin cancer authorities. So pull down the blinds and get your kit off: Dartmouth College researchers found that people who perform regular self-exams are twice as likely to find a melanoma as those who don't inspect.

THE TEST Each month, check out every centimetre of your body, advises dermatologist Dr Clifford Perlis. Look for the "ugly duckling" – a mark that differs from other moles and may have changed shape or colour. (See preventcancer.org/skin/know-your-abcdes.)

YOUR MOVE Slather on a sunscreen with an SPF rating of 30 or higher. (You'll keep hearing this until everyone does it.) And keep a record of your skin exams on your smartphone. The UMSkinCheck app (free, iTunes) stores your photographs and reminds you to perform self-exams. Ugly duckling? Let a dermatologist have a look.

TAKE A REST FOR YOUR TICKER

Few doc props are as iconic as the stethoscope casually slung around the neck. After all, it's the main way your GP assesses your heart health. But is it the best way? Not always. You need to measure your resting heart rate – and sitting on the edge of an exam table with a cold stethoscope pressed against your chest isn't necessarily "resting". Your ticker should be checked first thing in the morning – difficult for your doctor to do, unless you're sleeping together.

THE TEST While lying in bed, place a finger (not your thumb) on the inside of your wrist or the side of your neck and count the number of beats for 15 seconds. Multiply by four for your beats per minute.

YOUR MOVE A normal resting heart rate falls between 60 and 100 bpm. Are you sub-60? Then you probably have a fitter ticker than the next guy. In fact, you might like to consider a career in pro cycling. But if your heart rate is even just one point above 100, you could be at risk of a life-threatening electrical dysfunction like atrial fibrillation, says Wergin. If you're older than 50 or have risk factors for heart disease, check with your doctor for exercise recommendations. Also, eat foods rich in omega 3 fatty acids or take a supplement.

MOUTH OFF AT ORAL CANCER

You've spent a lifetime saying "ah", so you'd think a few doctors would have checked for oral cancer along the way. Probably not. Most peer into your piehole to scan for tonsillitis or strep throat. Why don't they look for cancerous lesions in there? Most GPs feel they're less proficient than dentists at performing oral-cancer exams or identifying dangerous lesions, according to a study in the *Journal of the American Dental Association*.

THE TEST Once a month, gape at the mirror and examine your mouth for any unusual bumps, red or white patches, swelling or bleeding. Then feel for any unusual lumps on either side of your neck.

YOUR MOVE All clear in the oral cavity? Now start filling it with cruciferous vegetables: people who ate a serving of broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage or cauliflower at least once a week reduced their risk of developing oral cancer by 17 per cent, according to a study in the *Annals of Oncology*. If you see or feel anything odd or unusual that persists for two weeks straight, head to the dentist's chair, says dentist Mark Wolff. Oral cancer is treatable if found early, so prompt action is paramount.

AUSTRALIAN Men'sHealth AND 7mate

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OFFICIAL
SKINCARE OF
AFL PLAYERS



“IT'S ALL ABOUT KEEPING IT SIMPLE AND IDENTIFYING YOUR NEEDS. FOR ME, I'M OUT IN THE SUN A LOT SO I LOOK FOR A GREAT MOISTURISER WITH SPF”

BARTEL'S MAN EXPERT TIPS

Meet Jimmy Bartel, L'Oréal Men Expert's official Man Expert. He shares his tips on how to be a man... who moisturises!

Top AFL player Jimmy Bartel is a man who looks after his skin. A long-time devotee of L'Oréal Men Expert, he's recently joined Megan Gale as an Australian L'Oréal Paris ambassador, where he'll share his skincare tips and tricks to keep you looking good.

And he's pumped! "L'Oréal Men Expert products have always been a favourite," he says. "They're simple and quick to use, with great results. I'm looking forward to being able to share my tips and favourite products with Aussie men!"



JIMMY'S FAVOURITES

1 Men Expert Magnetic Charcoal Cleanser, RRP \$12.25 The formula includes black charcoal, a powerful active ingredient to cleanse skin. Recognised for its purifying properties, charcoal acts as a magnet to capture and eliminate all kinds of dirt on the skin.

2 Men Expert SPF Moisturiser, RRP \$15.85 Containing SPF 15, this moisturiser helps protect against the harmful effects of the sun. The non-greasy formula keeps skin moisturised for 24 hours, removing that dry skin feeling.

3 Men Expert 3 Day Beard Moisturiser, RRP \$14.95 Both for the face and beard, the transparent, non-sticky formula hydrates skin and softens facial hair without leaving any residue.



Take a look at Jimmy's Man Expert tips at www.manexpert.com.au

Available at Coles, Woolworths, Priceline, Chemist Warehouse, Target, Big W and selected pharmacies nationally.

L'ORÉAL
MEN EXPERT



SMART MOVE

Fitness tracker meets sports watch with the arrival of the new Apple Watch

After an avalanche of hype, the Apple Watch is coming to a wrist near you. Slated to arrive in April, it promises to turn the humble smartwatch into a veritable genius.

While many watches are more about status than functionality, Apple's device is a true utility player. The watch face delivers real-time views of the info you check most often, from weather updates to the latest bulletins from the ASX. Notifications are signalled by a discreet tap to your wrist – handy for a subtle peek during the next interminable PowerPoint you're forced to endure at work.

Most exciting, though, are the

watch's implications for your health and fitness. The watch synchs with Apple's Health app, offering easy access to a dashboard of personal health and fitness info on the iPhone that can track anything from your magnesium levels to your body-fat percentage. Not only will it monitor the number of steps you take, it also measures the quality (ie, whether you're walking up a flight of stairs) and frequency of those strides.

The three rings of the Activity app reveal your daily progress at a glance in terms of kilojoules burned, activity taken and – most daunting of all for the average desk jockey – how sedentary you've been each day.

There's also a separate Workout app for dedicated cardio sessions. As it familiarises itself with your habits, Apple Watch can suggest personalised daily fitness goals for everything from running to cycling.

The notion of self-tracking wearables empowering you with the data to take control of your health and fitness isn't new. But a recent report shows a third of all consumers abandon their "smart wearables" within six months.* The sleek looks and all-round functionality of the Apple Watch, however, suggest this will prove a far less disposable purchase. Oh, and did we mention? It also tells the time.

PRICE: FROM US\$349

IN THE DRIVING SEAT

Geelong's Brownlow medal-winning utility explains how you can wear your confidence on your sleeve

WORDS – BEN JHOTY
PHOTOGRAPHY – CAMERON GRAYSON
FASHION EDITOR – MAIA LIAKOS
GROOMING – LISA GARNER

Jimmy Bartel strolls into a warehouse on a quiet industrial estate in North Geelong looking like he's ready for anything. Dressed in a slim-fitting black T-shirt and cream shorts, the 31-year-old triple premiership player and Norm Smith medallist is seven weeks into preseason training and it shows. He looks primed for action.

After shaking hands with the crew, he runs his eye over a vintage silver 1959 Porsche 356B, starkly illuminated in the gloom of the warehouse by great shafts of early morning light. They look made for each other. Bartel's the type of bloke who could wear just about anything and look sharp. At the same time, though, he's a man who knows that taking pride in your appearance can pay handsome dividends.

"If you look good, you feel good," says Bartel, admiring the sleek lines and spare décor of the classic sports car. "You feel like you belong in a room, you feel a part of it." The payoff? People respond to your confidence.

A knockabout bloke with an easy smile and relaxed air about him, Bartel grew up in the Geelong suburb of Herne Hill before attending the local Catholic school, St Josephs. Thrust into the limelight when he made his Geelong debut as a 17-year-old, in those days, he concedes, he wasn't so sure of himself, or his clothing choices.

"When you're younger you try to impress people," he says. "Now you try to impress yourself."

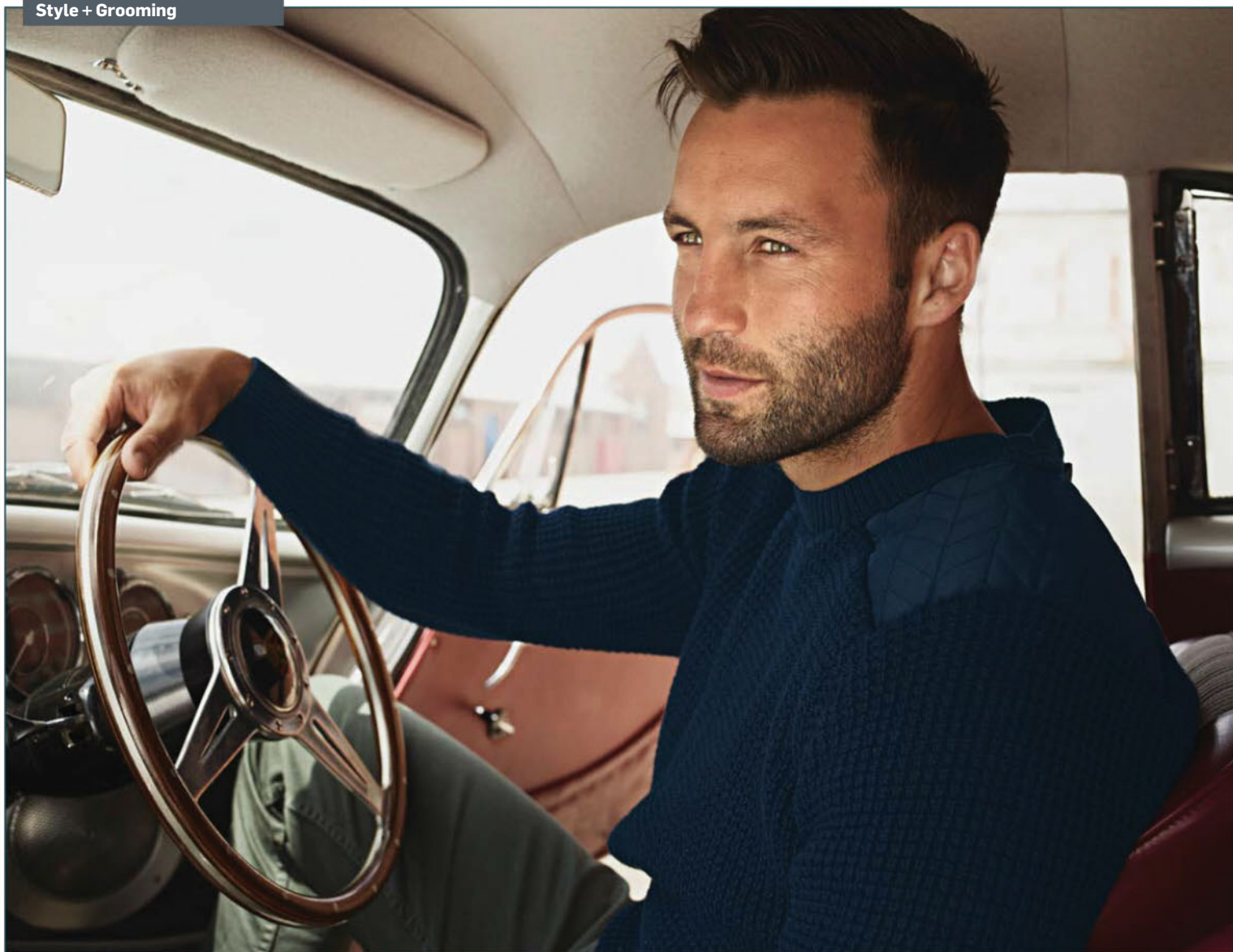
For Bartel, that means finding clothes and brands he feels comfortable in. The easiest way to do that, he says, is to find a fit that works for your body shape. "There's nothing worse than an ill-fitting suit or shirt," says Bartel, who stands a strapping 187 centimetres and rarely slouches.

In keeping with his laid-back demeanour, Bartel shuns bright colours and bold patterns, his taste firmly anchored around a muted palette of black, navy, grey and white. Similarly, when it comes to casual attire, Bartel favours brands like WitcheryMan and Vanishing Elephant that combine versatility with a more effortless style. It's a lesson with broad application: if you're confident in how you look, you don't need to shout it. →



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PAGE AND
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SHOPPING

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- MARCS "ARNIE" V-NECK T-SHIRT \$39
- MAVI "MARCUS" JEANS \$149.99
- ZU "HARVARD" BOOTS \$130



“From something that he once viewed as a chore, Bartel now recognises the value of dressing to impress”



Bartel credits the women in his life for his preference for coolly understated aesthetics. His partner, Nadia, founder of fashion blog *Chronicles of Nadia*, makes sure he never leaves the house looking less than his best. But growing up it was his two sisters who fussed over his sartorial choices and his mum who instilled the importance of making a good first impression. She never let him leave home with scuffed shoes. “It drives her mad – you’ve got a beautiful suit on and your shoes are all dirty and dusty.”

Old-school style imperatives still resonate with Bartel who, with his green eyes and shock of black hair, has a touch of the young Elvis about him. “They’re old-school rules for a reason,” he says.

From something that he once viewed as a chore, Bartel now recognises the value of dressing to impress. “In my younger days I probably wasn’t as active in looking for new things,” he says. “Wearing a suit was a pain in the arse; it was like a uniform you had to wear.”

Now he’s as comfortable in a well-cut suit as he is in jeans and a T-shirt. Which is perhaps the hallmark of a man with a true sense of style. Whatever the occasion, you’re dressed for it.

ABOVE

- TRENER “MOTO” LEATHER PATCH PULLOVER \$179
- COUNTRY ROAD “SIM” JEANS \$99.95

LEFT

- MARCS “BRANDO” CREW-NECK T-SHIRT \$39
- MAVI “MARCUS” JEANS \$149.99

RIGHT

- G-STAR “CORE” SHIRT \$140
- COUNTRY ROAD “SIM” JEANS \$99.95
- BAUHAUS “STOCKTON” BOOTS \$99.95 (FROM MYER)



BUILD YOUR STRONG SUIT

Fit for the Occasion

"Always make sure you're wearing a well-fitted shirt and jacket. If you buy a suit, spend the extra to get it tailored. You're more likely to wear it and you'll get more use out of it."

Go for Growth

"Being an athlete who's always outside, I'm very conscious of protecting my skin. These days having a beard is acceptable. But that doesn't mean you should let it go all ratty. I like L'Oréal Men's Hydra Energetic Moisturiser for 3-day Beards. It makes your beard and stubble really soft and is good to shave with."

Scroll and Roll

"I tend to use social media to find clothes these days. You do the Instagram scroll and you see things and you screengrab them, or you see the brand and you start clicking away. Ten minutes later, you find yourself buying something."

3 LEVELS OF AWESOME. 1 RAZOR

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5**

POWER SELECT

FREE YOUR SKIN™

Follow Your Nose

Navigate the fragrance counter with confidence and leave with a new signature scent

By Eleanor Pendleton

What's the secret when it comes to choosing a new cologne? "Go with someone you trust," says Nick Smart, founder of Agence de Parfum. They'll be brutally honest, preventing you from walking out of the store smelling like your grandma's potpourri. But don't make a final decision until the scent has lingered on you for at least 15 minutes. The fragrance has to fully react with your skin before you get an accurate impression – like red wine, you have to let it breathe.

FOR THE GO-GETTER

Need a blast of energy? Crystallised ginger delivers a heady rush of freshness, while the combo of raw salt mixed with vetiver packs a powerful punch. The result? "An exhilarating, salty oriental fragrance," says fragrance expert and scent designer Ainslie Walker.

CALVIN KLEIN REVEAL MAN EDT \$110/100ML

FOR THE ALPHA MALE

Used for centuries to make high-quality incense, oud is one of the world's most expensive types of wood. Here, it's spiced up with cardamom and a judicious splash of bitter orange for a smoky and uber-masculine scent.

VERSACE POUR HOMME OUD NOIR \$165/100ML

FOR THE AVID SURFER

This fresh reinterpretation of the 1996 classic features zesty grapefruit and sea salt – the kind of smell you'd associate with a killer right-hand reef break. "Ideal for hot climates and sporty types, it's like a salty wave in a bottle," Walker says.

GIORGIO ARMANI ACQUA DI GIÒ ESSENZA \$95/40ML

FOR THE HIGH ACHIEVER

What's the sweet smell of success? For men, a mix of patchouli and heavy spice notes, according to research done by Creston's Marketing Sciences Sensory Unit, which studied the smells that give off the greatest whiff of accomplishment. It's the fragrance world's equivalent of a corner office.

TOM FORD PRIVATE BLEND PATCHOULI ABSOLU \$295/50ML



FOR THE QUIETLY CONFIDENT

Equilibrium is the key to a life well lived and this fragrance strikes the perfect balance. Delicate but masculine, clean and fresh top notes mix into rich and warm aromas of tobacco and hay.

DOLCE & GABBANA INTENSO \$112/100ML →

FOR THE FASHION-FORWARD

You might not be able to bend it like Beckham, but now you can smell like him – or at least like a sophisticated concoction of lemon, bergamot and basil. "Elegant and masculine, like the man himself," says Walker.

DAVID BECKHAM INSTINCT GOLD EDITION \$39/50ML

FOR THE BIG CHEESE

A man of authority never has to raise his voice. That's the effect this scent will have as it makes a stealthy impression, with the initial hit of fresh juniper spiced up with fir and anchored by a warm hint of leather.

BOTTEGA VENETA POUR HOMME EXTREME \$145/90ML

FOR THE DEAL MAKER

Need a client to sign on the dotted line? Researchers at Leiden University say that lavender can make you seem more trustworthy. This scent features the note toughened up with a hint of suede leather.

CREED ABERDEEN LAVANDER \$385/100ML

THE SQUIRT LOCKER

Apply your cologne after a hot shower when your pores are open to capture the scent. To extract maximum value, target these areas

☉ Chest

Spray your cologne onto your pulse points. One of the most effective is the top of the chest and base of your throat – one or two squirts is plenty.

☉ Wrist

If you apply cologne to your wrists, don't rub it into your skin. The friction will break down the molecules, accelerating the scent's dissipation. Press your wrists together instead, advises Smart.

☉ Inside elbow

Want to get the most out of your cologne? Dab a touch onto the inside of your elbows – doing so will release fragrance throughout the day as you move around.



FOR THE MAN'S MAN

This aromatic woody scent exudes a rugged virility. "It's a unique mix of juniper berries, iris and blackwood, which is perfect for a man with a backbone," says Walker.

DAVIDOFF THE GAME \$80/60ML

FOR THE ROCK STAR

Burberry's chief creative officer, Christopher Bailey, described this fragrance as "trying to create the atmosphere of a gig in a juice". Translation: a powerful mix of leather and incense that's worth an encore.

BURBERRY BRIT RHYTHM \$77/50ML



BRING THE QUIET



NEW LYNX BLACK
AN UNDERSTATED GROOMING RANGE

 THE QUIET SIDE

PLAYERS LEGENDS

Two big guns of AFL go head to head, powered by PUMA

Fitted with the latest sports technology, PUMA gear gives top AFL players the edge they need to perform on the field and stay comfortable in their downtime. From elite athletes to rising stars, to those who work out for fun – PUMA has the right stuff to power your performance.

» THE STATS «

POSITION: MIDFIELD
AGE: 27
HEIGHT: 191CM
WEIGHT: 91KG
CAREER GAMES: 192
CAREER ORIGIN:
GIPPSLAND POWER

SCOTT PENDLEBURY

COLLINGWOOD CAPTAIN

See and shop the range at au.puma.com

A close-up portrait of Luke Hodge, a man with short brown hair and a light beard, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a black Puma jersey with white shoulder accents. The background is white with a grey dot pattern.

» THE STATS «

POSITION: UTILITY
AGE: 30
HEIGHT: 186CM
WEIGHT: 89KG
CAREER GAMES: 250
CAREER ORIGIN:
GEE LONG FALCONS

LUKE HODGE

HAWTHORN CAPTAIN

FOREVERFASTER  PUMA®

**LIVE A
LOT
LESS OR**



We asked the questions that matter to create a statistical portrait of the modern Aussie man. Who is he? What does he want? And does he get it? Allow us to introduce Mr Average – and help you rise above him



NOT ORDINARY



BECOME A MAN
OF MEANS, NOT A
MEDIAN WORKER

LEADER OF INDUSTRY

You work longer hours than your European counterparts. Don't be a slave to the wage – outsmart the field to stay a rung (and a pay grade) above

Get Some Job Satisfaction

A WORKING MAN'S LIFE CAN BE TOUGH – FIND A HEALTHY AND WEALTHY WAY OF GETTING THE JOB DONE

\$72,800

The average Australian (full-time) salary



Percentage of men who start their working day by getting a coffee

WHERE DO YOU RANK?

Here's the bottom line on annual pay in Australia

Profession	Average Salary
Lawyer (property)	\$150K
Software engineer	\$97K
Dentist	\$95K
Architect (project)	\$90K
Accountant	\$85K
Police officer (senior constable)	\$84K
High school teacher	\$74K
Chef	\$65K
Butcher	\$55K
Social Worker	\$50K

34%

of men have a motivational mantra. Your front-runner:

“Don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion”
– Muhammad Ali



78

Percentage of men who are “very” or “mostly” happy with their current job



86

Percentage of men unhappy in their work who are actively seeking a new job



41%

of job hunters say their main motivation is a need for new challenges

6%

of men would do a job they disliked for more money



Bend the Truth

SOME MEN WILL SAY ANYTHING TO GET AHEAD

34

Percentage of men who exaggerate when talking to recruiters

29

Percentage of CVs that include some "creative liberties"

39

Percentage of men who pulled a sickie in the past year

1

Percentage who were busted

Eye the Hot Seat

ASK YOURSELF: WHO IS THE BOSS OF YOU?



12%

of men worry that the boss monitors their every email



Percentage of men who've slammed their company on social media

7

10%

have taken a deep breath and said:

TAKE YOUR JOB AND SHOVE IT!



25%

of men reckon their boss treats them like a lackey

57

Percentage of men who've dreamed of having sex with a colleague



21

Percentage of men who suck up to a boss they'd rather kick in the balls

GIVE EVERYONE A DAY OFF TO CELEBRATE!

The first thing men would do if handed the company reins



Percentage of men who think their boss has the top spot deservedly



2 in 5

Proportion of men who have been seriously slobbered with a superior

Be Boss of the Office

More money, status and satisfaction; less stress*

JEST FOR THE BEST

"I'm saving for a private jet." Using humour "frames" your pay-rise request positively, so it's more likely to happen.

SCORE ANOTHER GOAL

Relentless goal-setting is toxic for job satisfaction. Seek out jobs that give you control, not responsibility.

PAINT A PICTURE

Resuscitate low motivation by setting progress reminders and envisaging the end result of a project.

RISE AND SHINE

Opt for early mornings over late nights. Your brain is more alert in the AM, allowing you to attack the to-do list and win.

HEAR THE YES MEN

Your opposite number saying "yeah" during a negotiation indicates they're making a decision, so strike quickly.

REVERSE STRESS

Take a step back and think. Literally. Walking backwards boosts your ability to think clearly in stressful moments.

BE A MEASURED MAN

The two most common traits among CEOs of *Fortune* magazine's Fortune 1000 companies are persistence and patience.

AVOID EYE CONTACT

Win arguments, secure allies and impress in group meetings by breaking this rule of body language.

SPREAD THE LOVE

Eat your way out of a bad day. Butter your sandwich with mashed avocado: its amino acids increase your dopamine levels.

GO HARD, NOT HOME

If you're coasting, taking on a project you feel under-qualified for will increase your job satisfaction. →

HEAD OF THE HOME

A man's work is never done, juggling the roles of homeowner, husband, father and fixer. Make your home your fortress



Beat the House

BY SAVING TIME, MONEY AND HAPPINESS

\$555,000

The average Australian home (house and unit) price in 2015, making Australia the least affordable housing market in the world, according to credit rating agency Fitch



29

Percentage of guys aged 18-34 who have failed to "launch" and are still living with their parents

3.5

The average number of waking hours you spend with your partner

1 in 8

Proportion of men who manage to see their family for less than an hour a day

31%

of men over the age of 18 are single

45

The median age at which men get divorced – up from 35 in 1980

Be the Daddy

THE MODERN FATHER GOES FURTHER

27%

of expecting fathers gained weight during their partner's pregnancy



1 in 5

of those stacked on more than 6kg

The average age of first-time fathers:

33



1 in 6

dads-to-be post the ultrasound scan on Facebook

\$406,000

The cost of raising a child up to the age of 21



4 in 5

men felt like doing cartwheels when they first saw their wailing newborn



6%

of men viewed their screaming newborn like something out of a Ridley Scott film

Win on the Home Front

Strengthen your family ties with our advice on being king of your castle

WAKE UP, PUCKER UP

Don't fly out the door when you oversleep; kissing your partner lifts your mood, says Dr Arthur Sazbo.

ENJOY GLORY DAYS

Sharing small successes with your other half makes you closer. No need to uncork the champagne when you set a PB – just act excited, says the University of Rochester.

FLIP OUT YOUR PHONE

Carry on sexting. Sending her compliments throughout the day raises relationship satisfaction, says the *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*.

BUMP UP EXPECTATIONS

Chat to your unborn child: babies are 80 per cent more likely to respond to a familiar voice.

GO BALD TO BE BOLDER

Walter White isn't our usual source of paternal inspiration, but if you have discipline issues consider his hairdo. The University of Pennsylvania found bald men are seen as stronger.

BUY A HELPING HAND

The average Australian guy fails to finish 53 per cent of the DIY jobs he starts. Go to hireahubby.com.au for free quotes from tradesmen.

PROTECT YOUR REP

If your pride won't accept help, at least save money on future repairs by consulting UltimateHandyman on YouTube. It's the largest collection of how-to videos.

BE A DOMESTIC DEITY

Two hours of housework a week boosts mental health, say researchers at Sweden's Karolinska Institute. Think of it as a thorough spring clean for your mind.

Finish the Job

SET YOURSELF UP AS KING OF THE CASTLE



58
The percentage of men who reckon they do half (or more than half) of the housework compared with their partners



4-5
The number of meals men whip up for the family every week



men are nagged by their partner into attempting home repairs



1 in 4
men reckon they'd botch any DIY project they turned their hand to



1 in 3
men say they have a repertoire of 10+ dishes they can whip up with absolute confidence at a moment's notice

35 MINUTES

The amount of time Australian men spend prepping food each day

6

The percentage of men who, try as they might, can't find their way to the stove

STEAK SANDWICH

THE DISH MOST MEN CONSIDER THEIR GO-TO



40%

of men would be lost if YouTube didn't guide them through the tougher jobs



Percentage of guys who say they know how to...

CHANGE A LIGHT FITTING: 81

INSULATE THE ROOF: 38

FIX A LEAKY TAP: 65

LANDSCAPE THE BACKYARD: 67

LAY CARPET: 25 →

A LIFE OF LEISURE

For Mr Average, socialising is done as much on screen as it is over a beer. Learn to switch off for genuine rest and relaxation

Wield Social Influence

BEAT SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION WITHOUT LOSING FOLLOWERS



11%
of men have resisted opening a Facebook account – or are bald-faced liars



16%
of men spend 2-4 hours a day on social media

2 in 5

Proportion of men who've sent/received sexy pics to/from a friend

21%

of men have checked in between gym sets



1 in 16
The number of men who'd sacrifice 2.5cm of height to gain 250,000 new Twitter followers

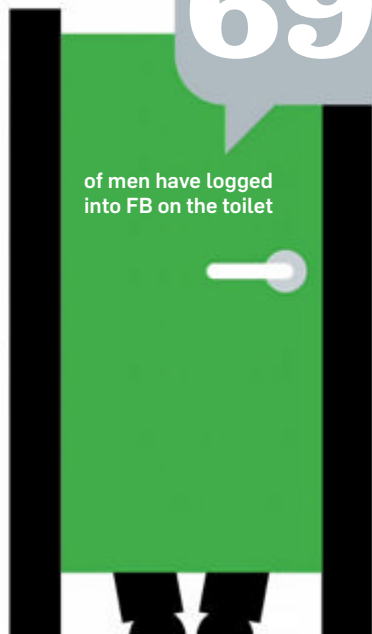
1 in 2

The number of guys who've tweeted while drunk



69%

of men have logged into FB on the toilet



PLUG IN TO WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING TO STAY AHEAD OF THE TRENDS



44%

OF GUYS HAVE USED SOCIAL MEDIA TO SPY ON FORMER FLAMES

Toast Your Health

DAMPEN STRESS AND MAKE
MERRY BY DRINKING SMARTER



1 in 4

men blame a fondness
of beer for their lack
of visible abs



1 in 4

men have cracked
a can with their
Corn Flakes

1 in 3

guys wish beer labels
included obvious
kilojoule counts



The percentage of men
who'll never stoop to
having a beer when
they're alone

31

The percentage of men
who regard not finishing
a beer as poor form

1 in 2

men say burying the
hatchet with a mate is
best done over a beer



25%

of guys have been in a fist fight
as a result of being tanked



1 in 5

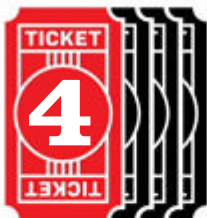
men would sooner go
without sex for a month
than give up beer

40

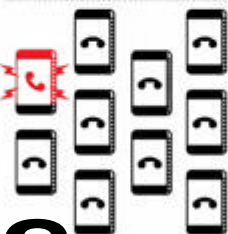
The percentage of
men who feel more
attractive with a few
beers under their belt

Be a Leading Man

TAKE THE CREDITS WITH MAN'S FAVOURITE PASTIME



The number of times,
on average, men go to
the cinema each year



8

Percentage of men
who've taken a phone
call mid-flick



35%

of men prefer to stream
movies at home



28%

of men have walked out
of a crappy film

1 in 3

guys attempt to
sneak their own
food into cinemas



43

Percentage of guys
who've gone to the
cinema alone

YOUR TOP GUY FILMS

1. *Die Hard*
2. *Fight Club*
3. *Top Gun*
4. *Rocky*

Rest Easy

Make stress your bitch
with these tips

LAUGH IT OFF

Ease your gym guilt with
15 minutes of comedy
viewing. Hearty chuckles
lower your blood pressure
as much as exercise, says
the University of Maryland.

RETRO-FIT YOUR FIX

In a LoveFilm study,
Eighties classic *Flying
High!* scored the most
laughs per minute,
followed by *The Hangover*.

WATCH 'EM AND WEEP

Don't resent her love of
The Notebook. Tragic
romances heighten your
sense of gratitude, say
US scientists.

SWAP STRESS FOR SEX

The key to switching off
is being turned on. A racy
episode of *True Blood* puts
the bite on anxiety.

LIFT SOME WEIGHT

Listen to the world's most
relaxing song, *Weightless*
by Marconi Union. Its BPM
is proven to lower yours.

TAKE A SHOT, SOONER

Have a post-work drink
between five and six pm.
Your liver will process the
alcohol faster.

BE A SOCIAL CREATURE

A night with your mates
lifts cognitive function,
research has shown. Beats
doing a crossword.

HASH IT OUT

Don't shy away from a
fight. The University of
Michigan found avoiding a
heated discussion spikes
stress-hormone levels.

FACE UP TO FACEBOOK

Overuse of social media
lowers life satisfaction,
says the Public Library
of Science. Leave the feed
for 24 hours.

GET OUTTA HERE

Need to justify your
holiday? The fewer trips
you go on, the higher
your heart-attack risk.
Taking time out now pays
dividends down the track.

Penrith's Matt Moylan
has built panther-like
speed that leaves
opponents trailing.



FITNESS FREAKS OF THE NRL

BY GRANT TAYLOR

RUGBY LEAGUE IS ALL ABOUT BIG MEN HITTING HARD – FOR 80 BRUTAL MINUTES. AS THE 2015 SEASON LOOMS, THREE OF THE NRL'S PRIME MOVERS SHARE THEIR SECRETS TO HELP YOU REACH NEW PEAKS OF **ENDURANCE, **STRENGTH** AND **SPEED**** →

***“BEING IN PEAK CONDITION
MEANS MY PERFORMANCE
ONLY DECLINES SLIGHTLY AS
THE FULL-TIME SIREN NEARS”***



ENDURANCE

STRENGTH

SPEED

The ENGINE

MANLY-WARRINGAH SEA EAGLES HOOKER
MATT BALLIN IS WIDELY CONSIDERED THE
LEAGUE'S FITTEST PLAYER. HERE'S HOW THE
DUAL-PREMIERSHIP WINNER NEVER LETS UP

VITAL STATS



AGE
30

HEIGHT
179CM

WEIGHT
89KG

POSITION
HOOKER

In rugby league, tackling is hard yakka. Stopping a ball runner dead in his tracks means harnessing leg, core and upper-body power, time and time again. Matt Ballin knows all about tackling, finishing among the NRL's top six tacklers for the past three seasons and leading the league in 2012. "Genetically, Matt is just a beast," says Don Singe, head strength and conditioning coach at the Sea Eagles. "He's an anomaly in that he has both amazing anaerobic and aerobic systems, resulting in great tackles – and lots of them."

The man himself believes his ability to play the full 80 minutes has been crucial to his consistency. "Being in peak physical condition means my performance will only decline slightly as the full-time siren nears," says Ballin. Here's how he outlasts – and outblasts – his opponents.

ENGINEER YOUR WORKOUT

A killer preseason is the foundation of Ballin's endurance. That's why he

PHOTOGRAPHY: KRISTIAN TAYLOR WOOD

42.4

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF
TACKLES BALLIN MADE
PER GAME LAST SEASON**

MINI'S SCOUT REPORT

Rugby league is a game of strength, power and speed, and those who can maintain all three usually stand above the pack, reckons former Sydney Roosters fullback Anthony Minichiello, a man renowned for his chiselled six-pack. "Some guys can't do it, while other guys can turn it on every now and then," he says. "Matt Ballin *always* does it." While his tackling ability is consistently on show, it's when Manly are on the attack that Minichiello believes Ballin's fitness comes to the fore. "When the opposition are tiring and the defence is on the back foot, Ballin is always able to get to his mark and provide his dangerous attacking players with early ball."



ENDLESS ENDURANCE

Ballin's huge motor means he blitzes most endurance drills. But if there's one challenge he dreads, it's "The Malcolm". Named after former Great Britain and Manly hardman Mal Reilly, this drill will have you blowing hard in no time, says Ballin. Shuffle it into your cardio routine to build an engine that never falters.

- Standing on a line, mark another line 10m in front of you, and another 10m beyond that.
- Run to the first line, drop to your chest and explode back up. Run to the next line, drop to your chest and explode back up.
- Turn around and repeat the previous step in reverse until you are back on the original line. That's one rep. Do 10. →



starts two weeks early, hitting the streets to get miles in his legs. That way, when training officially begins, he's able to hit the ground running. "There's no easing-in period; it's full throttle from the get-go," he says.

Every time Ballin trains he strives to emulate game-day intensity. Whether it's an agility drill, a set of sprints or a timed interval, he'll go flat out for 2-3 minutes, simulating a moment in a game like a broken-field dart or a try-saving tackle. "At any given time during a training session, I know what I'm trying to achieve," he says.

FIRE UP YOUR THRUSTERS

As a dummy half, recruiting strength and explosiveness regardless of whether his legs are flexed or extended is crucial to Ballin's ability to provide express ball-deliveries that put his team on an attacking roll. To sharpen his explosive ability, he turns to the barbell. "Matt needs leg power, but he also needs a solid core

and lower back, and that's why we get him squatting so much," says Singe, pointing out that few blokes his size can squat 175 kilograms, almost twice his body weight, for three reps. "His strength-to-body-weight ratio is truly exceptional."

RECOVER SMARTER

You don't string together a club-record 182 consecutive games through good genes and blind luck. It requires careful monitoring of your physical condition and astute planning.

"When we look at Matt's game and training data, he's always going above and beyond his required efforts, so we're constantly looking at reining in his training so that he doesn't burn out," says Singe.

Even in recovery, however, Ballin remains a tireless workhorse, taking to the ocean every day to rejuvenate aching muscles. "Walking through the resistance of the saltwater gets your muscles working without too much physical strain," he says.

ENDURANCE

STRENGTH

SPEED

The FREIGHT TRAIN

THERE'S POWER, THEN THERE'S UNSTOPPABLE. HERE'S HOW SYDNEY ROOSTERS AND NEW ZEALAND ENFORCER **JARED WAEREA-HARGREAVES** BARGED HIS WAY TO THE TOP OF THE NRL

Trains are big. They take a long time to stop. And they obliterate anything foolish enough to find itself in front of one. Jared Waerea-Hargreaves is a runaway train, leaving opposition defenders on their backs and enabling an often-rampaging Roosters attack to stroll downfield.

"As a front-rower, you're likely to get bashed," he grins. "My mum always told me: 'Bash them before they bash you.'" In a league where everyone is bigger, faster and tougher than us mere mortals, that's hard work – something Waerea-Hargreaves knows plenty about.

UNLEASH YOUR SPEED

"Power starts with speed," says Waerea-Hargreaves. "That's been one of my focuses this off-season – getting off the mark quicker." For that, Travis Touma, head of performance at the Sydney club, developed a special program in which the sprint coaches work in unison with the strength coaches. "In the gym, we do spilt-style squats and reverse-hyperextensions (like a hyperextension but extending the legs, not the torso), focusing a lot on the posterior-chain," says Touma.

On the paddock, Waerea-Hargreaves performs harness sprints, winding up acceleration as someone holds him back, before being unleashed like a sling-shot at nine metres a second. "That's how quick we've measured Jared over 40m," says Touma.

VITAL STATS

AGE
26HEIGHT
192CMWEIGHT
116KGPOSITION
PROP
FORWARD

MAN UP IN THE WEIGHT ROOM

Touma keeps Waerea-Hargreaves' power plan simple, with classic lifts like the squat, the deadlift, the bench and the power clean performed at a "higher" rep range of 6-8 lifts at 70 per cent of his one-rep max. Over an eight-week program, the focus then shifts to double or single reps, at 95-100 per cent of his one-rep max.

"Rugby-league is a game of power and repeated efforts," says Waerea-Hargreaves. "It's easy to separate the boys from the men – and the gym is where I try to become a man." By that he means deadlifting 220kg, and breaking the club's power-clean record with a 155kg lift. "Most humans aren't capable of doing what Jared can," says Touma. Tough stuff, indeed!

KEEP IT CLEAN

A big torso might look impressive, but Waerea-Hargreaves knows it's his total-body power that does the damage on the field. To build it, hit the power clean. "You can't cheat the clean; it's such a technical move that you need to be totally body-aware and strong in every area to throw that weight," he says. Aim for six-reps, then drop into a 15m weighted-sledge push. Repeat twice. "Between these two exercises, you'll recruit just about every muscle group for explosive power," says Touma. "If you're looking for a benchmark, Jared will push a 100kg sledge 15m in five seconds."

MINI'S SCOUT REPORT

"Nobody wants to run at Jared," says Minichiello. "I'm just glad I played on the same team as him!" While size and power are certainly useful on the field, it's his mindset that sets Waerea-Hargreaves apart from other big men, reckons Mini. "He has such a ruthless competitiveness that he brings to his training. His Olympic lifts are freakish, and the aggression he brings to the gym makes everyone else work that bit harder."



CLEAN
155KG

ALL-OUT ASSAULT

"There's an apparatus in our gym that no player likes," says Touma. "We use the Assault Bike for two reasons – to build and measure power output, and as a penalty system." Demanding huge exertion from both the upper and lower body to work against air resistance, it also replicates the cardiac and aerobic efforts required on the field. "As players make repeat efforts of 100 per cent, we enjoy watching them turn green," says Touma.

- On the assault bike, perform a six-second sprint at 100 per cent effort.
- Rest until fully recovered, then repeat five times. Record maximum output as a benchmark for next time. →



ENDURANCE

STRENGTH

SPEED

The FLASH

IN 2014, THE PENRITH PANTHERS EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS. NO COINCIDENCE IT WAS THE SAME SEASON **MATT MOYLAN** LIT UP THE LEAGUE WITH HIS BLISTERING PACE

Matt Moylan calls himself a fullback. Nothing more. But if you watch the highlights reels or ask anyone with knowledge of the game, it's clear this kid's a rolled-gold match winner. The key to his success? It's not the power to bowl opposition tacklers over or leave them picking grass out of their mouthguard – it's his red-hot acceleration.

"As the age-old saying suggests, you can't buy speed," says Ron Palmer, veteran NRL fitness guru and head of strength and conditioning at the western Sydney club. "What Matt has is elusiveness and deceptive speed. Players don't realise how fast he is until it's too late and he's run right past them."

VITAL STATS



AGE **23**
HEIGHT **185CM**
WEIGHT **93KG**
POSITION **FULLBACK**

TAP THE GAS

Moylan's game relies on drop-of-a-hat speed. "In defence, I often need to cover a lot of ground quickly," he says. "In attack, pace gives me a little bit more time to make decisions, whether that involves hitting a hole at full speed or trying to get outside my man."

But the ability to turn on the afterburners at will demands a complete recuperation from weekday training sessions. "We give Matt a 48-hour taper period before game day," Palmer says. "If he's running on tired legs, then he can't cover ground quick enough to make those try-saving tackles or break through seemingly impenetrable lines like he does."

4.92 TIME OVER 40M IN BOOTS ON GRASS

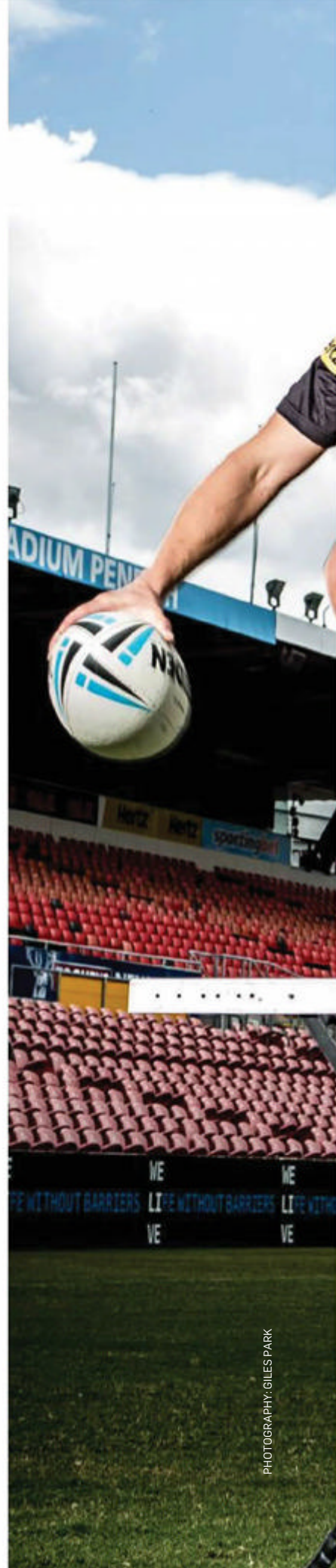
PUMP UP YOUR PISTONS

"Moylan is footy-fast, in that he has a truly unbelievable turn of pace and amazing balance," says Palmer. The foundation for his on-field velocity is a strong core and explosive leg power, which he gets from the big three: squats, deadlifts and power cleans. Performed in sets of 6-8 reps, Moylan combines these exercises with explosive moves like box jumps, hurdle jumps and sledge-pulls, putting his quads and hamstrings to the sword. "Naturally, Matt isn't overly powerful," says Palmer. "He's had to work hard in the gym. But the result has been an increase in his overall strength, as well as the number of fast-twitch fibres he can recruit for bursts of speed."

MINI'S SCOUT REPORT

A legendary fullback in his own right, Minichiello knows the importance of speed better than anyone. "It's arguably the most important attribute in a footy player, and you either have it or you don't," he says. "Moylan is a pure footy player with pace to burn." In the modern game, there are only fractions of seconds in which a player has to make a decision on where to run. "His speed and turn of foot give Moylan that little bit of extra time."

SUPER COACH Minichiello will be keeping a keen eye on the NRL this year in his new role as the *Daily Telegraph's* Supercoach ambassador (dailytelegraph.com.au/supercoach). "I'm super excited," he says. "Choosing players for your team, analysing their performances and comparing your results to the rest of the competition adds a little bit more excitement to rugby league each week."



PHOTOGRAPHY: GILES PARK

***"IN ATTACK, PACE GIVES
ME A LITTLE MORE TIME
TO MAKE DECISIONS"***



FAST AND FURIOUS

To be able to run fast at any given stage in a game, Moylan practises short sprints, repeatedly. "We do a five-minute speed test; we don't really run far, but the stopping and starting means I'm puffing hard by the end," he says.

- Standing on a line, place three cones at 30m, 40m and 50m.
- Run to 30m, then back to the start; 40m, back; 50m, back.
- That's one rep. Do five in five minutes. ✕



— TAKE THE —
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HEALTHIER
MOUTH**



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*Offer available from 4th March to 17th March
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® Registered trade Mark. #3649





THE LUST LIST

by Laura Tedesco
photography by Zach Ramsey

**YOUR EROTIC LIFE IS
FULL OF BIG MOMENTS.
ORGASMS, YES, BUT
ALSO FIRST TIMES,
FIRST FAILS AND
VERY ORIGINAL SINS.
WE REVEAL **ALL 25**
HERE, TO TITILLATE
AND TEACH →**

T

here's an old joke about a bloke who gets stranded on a desert island with Elle Macpherson.

After many attempts

at seduction, our old mate – let's call him Jay – eventually manages to get down and dirty with the supermodel (she's in her Eighties prime). They proceed to engage in all sorts of sexual shenanigans – it's amazing what you can do with vines.

As good as it is, though, Jay isn't completely satisfied. Eager to please, Elle asks if there's anything she can do. Jay thinks for a while. Then it comes to him. He asks her to put on his clothes and draws a moustache on her face. Then, over some chilled coconut juice, he leans in and says, "Hey mate, you'd never guess who I've been rooting".

Sex. Nothing is more breathtaking, thrilling or consequential in a man's life – except, perhaps, talking about sex. The trouble is, as you get older, kissing and telling goes from being almost mandatory to vaguely uncouth. That's a shame, because while there is certainly a place for discretion, absolute privacy limits your chance to analyse, share high points, harvest lessons or, in Jay's case, brag about your exploits.

That's why it's so much fun to talk about sex. And that's why we gathered these tales of formative filth – from mindblowing orgasms to bungled attempts at seduction. It's a confessional orgy that puts sex in perspective. Because, really, who doesn't like to share?

the wow years

1/ You fondle her breasts for the first time

Phil, 23: My heart was hammering and I stopped breathing for, like, a minute. I was dizzy but hyper-conscious. Then I remembered to breathe again.

Not National Geographic or Playboy or YouPorn can prepare a young man for that under-the-shirt moment. "For most people in our culture, sex requires vulnerability," says Dr Justin Sitron, a sexuality researcher at Widener University. That first moment of intimacy is heart-pounding. But the thrill of new experiences fades. Try confining nudity to sexual encounters. That way, says Sitron, her breasts will retain their sexual power.

2/ You discover masturbation

Dave, 42: No pamphlet explained orgasms – the build-up, the final rush, the exhilaration. Or the mess. The first time I brought it on, it scared the living shit out of me. I lay there paralysed, eyes wide, breathing fast. I knew that something epic had just happened. Suddenly, the world was far more complicated than I'd thought – and quite a bit weirder too. Also: really, really awesome.

3/ Your first "real" kiss

Laura, 25: He was a footy player. I was 15; he was 18, and his sexual history – extensive, I was sure – intimidated me. As we pashed, my nerves bubbled over in a laugh – a full-on guffaw. "What are you laughing at?" he said, shocked, then adding with apology: "It's my first time kissing a girl while sober." Suddenly I knew: this cool guy was just as terrified as I was. It was a revelation that carried me through many other firsts. If I'm nervous, my partner probably is too.

4/ Your first rejection

Happens to every guy. Well, maybe not Clooney. But what matters is what you do with it. "That feeling of frustration is extremely formative," says sex therapist Brandy Engler. If rejection continues, she notes, "some guys start seeing women as fickle or teasing". Don't fall into that trap. Failures are phantoms; make them disappear. "Connect with the woman who is here with you now," says Engler.

5/ You lose your virginity (finally)

"When a woman says, 'I want you too' for the first time, it's incredibly validating," says Engler. That's not to say it will be entirely satisfying. Who's great at anything the first time they try it? (Okay, bitter vitriol came pretty naturally to Kyle Sandilands). If your first partner seems indifferent or doesn't climax, it can be devastating. Put it out of your mind: "Women have their own hang-ups and struggles in bed," Engler says.

28

PERCENTAGE OF GUYS WHO'VE HAD 15 OR MORE PARTNERS

SOURCE: CENTRES FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

learning curves

6/ **She teaches you something important – with her body**

Marc, 23: In my first year of uni, my girlfriend took it upon herself to teach me a few things – I was the virgin in the relationship. We started having sex, and one night she asked if I wanted to try doggy-style. Obviously I agreed. Then she flipped open the door of the cheap uni dresser and angled the mirror so we could watch.

Let her lead. “Encourage her to share what she wants to do,” suggests Engler. “Ask her, ‘What have you always wanted to try but haven’t?’” Now you’re not her student – you’re the guy who just fulfilled her fantasy.

7/ **You bring her to climax**

Seeing her body in the throes of pleasure is up there with the first time you lick an ice-cream. You, the big stud, actually had something to do with it. “Men are socialised to care about achieving goals and their performance,” says Sitron. Over time, repeated achievement loses some of its charge, so focus on the subtle changes. “Place a hand on her abdomen to feel her pelvic contractions, especially if they’re from clitoral stimulation and you’re not inside her,” says Sitron. “Lay your head on her chest to hear her heart beat faster. Or try standing up while you’re having sex so you can feel the weakness in her knees.”

8/ **You realise that women are horny, just like you are**

Sarah Colonna: One night, when I was working in a bar, I grabbed some drinks with a customer after work. His only conversation topic was his biceps – but really, he did have nice biceps. I decided I’d have sex with him. A mutual friend →

the first 'real' kiss

warned me that he wouldn't make a good boyfriend "because he wasn't great at thinking". But I just wanted his abs on top of me – at his place, not mine. I wanted everything to occur in one night, where I wouldn't have to risk his wanting to "hang out" in the morning or, worse, endure an awkward breakfast with him eating egg whites and spinach and me drinking too many Bloody Marys so I could find something to talk about. I had my fun, then I snuck out once he fell asleep. The next time he came into the bar, he asked for my phone number. "We don't have to do that," I told him. "The sex was fun; let's not ruin it." I felt liberated.

- Colonna is the author of *Life As I Blow It*.

9/ You try something new and crazy – and it's amazing

Rachel, 28: I dated women at uni, so the idea of a threesome seemed natural. But I'm a married woman, and with marriage comes jealousy. So I bought books about non-monogamy and forced my husband to read them. Eventually he came to agree with me: lifelong partnership is great... but lifelong monogamy is a stretch. Then my opportunity came. "What do you want for your birthday?" my friend Nika asked. "Girl sex," I said. "A threesome!" I laughed, but when she touched me, my body pulsed. Cut to our apartment. My husband put on a record while Nika crawled onto my lap, facing me. Through the curtain of her hair I caught my husband's thumbs-up. The rest happened in flashes. She and I in the shower, then on the floor. The three of us in a tangle of limbs. Mid-act, I caught my husband's eye and grinned. Surprisingly, I felt happy that he was having this experience, and not jealous. It was something to hold on to, a lesson as our date tipped her head back in orgasmic bliss.

95
PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO THINK SEX IS BETTER WHEN THEY HAVE A STRONG EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH THEIR PARTNER

SOURCE: DUREX

10/ You open her eyes to something entirely new

Elissa, 29: I imagined I'd one day be experienced and powerful, able to enjoy the erotic influence of my body. Instead I was sexually inhibited – until a bisexual woman I knew wrote my eight-word biography: "Your mind has a lock on your c!t." She told me to do a lot more masturbating, fantasising and writing and drawing my own porn. She told me I needed more secrets, really naughty ones. I should assert my right to pleasure... myself. Once I mastered where and how I wanted to be touched, I could give direction to someone else. She helped me recreate sex from my point of view and unlock my mental chastity belt – a perspective that could make sex better for me and my partner. This knowledge is a sure path to bliss.

11/ Your first time with a sex toy

Madeline, 27: "Um, Madeline, what is this?" he asked as he rummaged through my bedside table for a condom. I knew what he'd found; I could hear it humming. Was he being sarcastic? Was he intrigued? I just encouraged him to play. Vibe in hand, simultaneously kissing my neck, he seemed like a pro, gently trailing it over my breasts, down my torso, between my thighs. But after a few minutes, this tantalising path went nowhere – fast. Spoiler alert: he really didn't know what he was doing. "I guess I assumed you'd jump in and show me the ropes," he said. So I did. We laughed, we learned, we got over it, and we got off.



**MY HUSBAND
PUT ON A
RECORD WHILE
NIKA CRAWLED
ONTO MY LAP**

trouble

**12/ Your relationship
hits a sexual dry spell**

Mat, 28: Getting married was a defining point. It ended my sex life.

Dry spells teach you how to continue eroticising your partner when the rip-your-clothes-off passion fades. "When you live with a woman, it's easy to desexualise her," says Engler. "How do you sexualise a woman who's PMSing? Or doing the dishes?" Engler's suggestion: in that less-than-attractive moment, create a sexy story about her. "Imagine taking her hair down, disrobing her and doing it in the kitchen," says Engler. Start asking yourself, "What could we do, right now, in this room?". Then try it.

13/ You can't get it up

Maybe ED strikes when you're 30. Or maybe you're a lucky guy whose rod is spared until he's 60. Either way, having a limp penis is embarrassing – and seeking assistance can be, too. So change that: a study at Dalhousie University suggests that eroticising treatments for erectile dysfunction can improve their effectiveness (at the same time making you feel less weird about resorting to them). Treat the little blue pill like a toy: pop one during romantic activities leading up to sex – in full view of your partner. That way, you'll start to associate it with erotic enhancement and both of you will see it as a signal of what's to come, the researchers say.

**impulses
& regrets**

41 PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO SAY
FEELING A WOMAN CLIMAX WAS
A SEXUAL TURNING POINT
SOURCE: MH SURVEY

**14/ You do something
that you really wish
you hadn't**

Jim, 30: Don't get drunk and hook up with strippers, or you'll get cold sores.

Some of men's top sexual regrets, according to a UCLA study: cheating, having sex with someone they were not attracted to and hooking up with a co-worker. "Do a little self-reflection," Engler suggests. "Ask, 'What did I really want?'" It's only when you figure out the "why" that you can avoid a repeat performance.

longer had the right. Sex happened easier than it did when we were together, perhaps because it was now unburdened by love. It was like a magic trick deciphered. Where once there was the supernatural, now there were only wires and mirrors. Though the call of the past is awfully alluring, it's perhaps best not to go back, because what is a magic trick without the magic?
- Goldstein is the author of *I'll Seize the Day Tomorrow*

**16/ You realise sex
doesn't have to be like
it is in the movies**

Rachel, 37: My boyfriend outweighs me by almost 90 kilograms and our bodies don't fit naturally together. When I'm on top, for instance, I have to balance my body carefully. Sex doesn't just happen. We've had to experiment – a lot. We found our position: me on the edge of the bed, him standing. We incorporate sex toys. We brainstorm. And we laugh and have fun, even if we have to try out a few things before something works. →

**15/ You put the
"ex" in sex**

Jonathan Goldstein: At 18 I lost my virginity. For the next two years I loved my first sex partner passionately and, often, insanely. About a year after we split, she asked to meet up. Drinks with an ex seemed so adult and civilised. We met in a park to split a cheap bottle of white wine. Halfway in, she invited me to her apartment, which smelled of patchouli oil and incense. It was the kind of thing I'd have once teased her about, but just then it felt like I no

*trying out
something new*

17/ You survive an embarrassment in bed

Andrew, 25: One afternoon, my girlfriend and I retreated to my bedroom for a post-swim romp. I decided to veer from our norm – quiet, quick missionary. “Close your eyes,” I told her. I cued up Kanye West’s Heard ‘Em Say and climbed on top of her, thrusting and grunting to the beat. I expected laughter and maybe an orgasm. Instead, she pushed me out of bed and killed the music. Lesson: clear any role-playing ideas beforehand – and clarify who’s playing who.

18/ You have sex in public

Jeff Dye: I didn’t lose my virginity until I was 21, and even then I thought God would smite me for not being married. Which was why my mind was in overdrive when her body and hands and lips made clear her intention to have sex – in the taxi. I thought, “There’s no way this driver can’t hear us! Or see us!” But after, I wondered: why is being safe and normal not just called “boring”? Why is it “slutty” and not “exciting”? My conclusion: life and sex weren’t created to be boring.

- Dye is a stand-up comedian and star of MTV’s Girl Code



twenty two

PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO WISH THEY HADN'T HAD CASUAL SEX
SOURCE: ARCHIVES OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

love
(and other mysteries)

19/ Your first time having sex with someone you love

Patti Stanger: I started my matchmaking career in my thirties. That’s how I met Pierre. He was French. He was a bad boy. And he insisted that I come first, every time. One hitch: he wouldn’t give me monogamy – an ugly divorce had left him jaded. But I stayed with him for four years, afraid he was the best I’d ever have. Then I met Jacob. We quickly became exclusive, and the sex was psychedelic – everything tasted better, smelled better . . . multiple orgasms. With Pierre, it was just sex. But Jacob and I made love. Why? Because Pierre’s refusal to commit limited us to one kind of sex: hook-up sex. But with monogamy you enjoy a whole menu of sex: poke-her-in-the-morning sex, stressed-out sex, angry sex. Worth the wait, right?
- Stanger is the star of The Millionaire Matchmaker Partners

APIX SYNDICATION

88
DAYS IT TAKES THE AVERAGE GUY TO SAY, “I LOVE YOU”

134
DAYS A WOMAN WAITS
SOURCE: EHARMONY



**SHE LET ME KNOW
WHAT SHE WANTED.
BITE HERE. HARDER!**

20/ **Your first one-night stand**

Mike, 26: The bar was packed and I was playing a video game; I wasn't there to meet anyone. But then a hand grazed my backside. I turned to see a beautiful woman, older than I was, looking me directly in the eyes. I asked if she wanted to play Big Buck Hunter. No, really. After a few games – and a few negronis – I was on a street corner, watching her climb into a taxi. Then she turned and gave me that gaze. Forty-five minutes later, I was under her covers and she was on top of me. This wasn't fumbling uni sex. She let me know exactly what she wanted. Touch here. Bite. Harder! We never spoke again, but she changed me. If I could handle her – a gorgeous woman 10 years my senior – I knew I could handle girls my own age. She took me out of my sexual comfort zone, and I came away a more confident man.

21/ **You need to improvise**

Michael, 36: There's a sex trap most men don't see coming – thinking about sex as a series of urgent events leading to penetration. I didn't realise this until age 35, when I dated a woman who had herpes. With the possibility of penetration set aside, a new sexual landscape opened up. I learned that the pocket between her upper lip and gums was intensely sensitive, almost orgasmic. I realised it turned me on to make small talk while I masturbated. Having her hover over me without ever touching – her breasts, labia or bum inches from my face. Our physical pleasure depended on opening small new parts of ourselves – and I realised that sex can be found in almost anything if you just look for it. The search is its own reward.

22/ **You surprise her (in a good way, for once)**

Ophira Eisenberg: My blind date was with a guy who needed "cheering up". Fine. Then I saw him: thinning blond ponytail, faded T-shirt. He told me he was trying to get over his ex, but it was tough, you know, since they'd had a baby together. I asked what he did for a living. "Pastry chef," he replied. Suddenly, he was transformed. I blushed as he described folding fine layers of filo dough drizzled with raspberry confit. Now I saw someone who was interesting, accomplished, even admirable. And I went home with him. This man had the most advanced touch I've ever experienced. He set the bar for all my future encounters.
- Eisenberg is the author of *Screw Everyone: Sleeping My Way to Monogamy*

23/ **You say, "I love you"**

Stewart, 56: Best not to blurt those words out in a bout of post-orgasmic Tourette's. A better time: when you wake up together, and it really does feel like home. Now go make her breakfast; real love is an everyday thing, like scrambled eggs on toast. Over and over and over.

24/ **Having sex to make a baby**

Charles Demers: When my dear wife announced that we were expecting, it signalled that five months of nervous, self-conscious sex had come to an end. I hadn't been able to reconcile lust with making a baby. It psyched me out. I could manage only wholesome, PG sex. I dreaded the night my wife might say, "Talk dirty to me", to which I could only have stammered, "Oh... I just... love you". If kinky leads to conception, then you may one day face the question, "Dad, how was I born?" and have to respond, "Well, Mummy was... pretending to be a hostage".
- Demers is a comedian and author of *The Prescription Errors*

25/ **Having sex with your last partner for the first time**

Paul, 28: It wasn't until our third date that I thought about how she would look naked. With other women, their nude bodies had been my first thought. It wasn't that this woman didn't have a body worth fantasising about. She just never gave me the chance: during our first date, her eyes wouldn't let me look anywhere but into them. Or I would watch her lips as she spoke and imagine kissing them – but nothing more. The rest would come. It took another month before we had sex. Great sex, but sex that was different from any I'd experienced before. Sex with your last partner – the woman you hope to spend the rest of your life with – carries a sense of patience. You are more the imperturbable hunter, lying in wait for it, than the chaser. The lust persists, but it's fuelled by an ambition for intimacy. A botched attempt is no longer a deflating defeat. There's tomorrow and all the days after.

29 PERCENTAGE OF MEN
WHO SAY THEIR BEST
SEX WAS WITH AN EX

26 PERCENTAGE WHOSE
BEST SEX INCLUDED A
NEW OR UNUSUAL ACT
SOURCE: LOVEHONEY

What Are You

SICK OF YOUR SORRY HAM AND CHEESE SANGER? FIND OUT HOW TO MAKE

By Ray Klerck

Photography by Richard Mortimer

Styling by Karen Gillis



Packin'?

YOUR LUNCHES ALL KILLER NO FILLER



MAKE THESE MEALS
USE THE FREE **VIEWA**
APP TO SCAN THE PAGE
AND GET THE RECIPES

You're kidding me, egg sandwiches again?"

Chances are you uttered those words, or something to that effect in the days when your mum packed your lunch. Back then, the contents of your lunchbox could make or break your day. Vegemite sandwiches could see you sail right through the arvo. But open your lunch box to discover warm, slightly putrid egg sandwiches and you'd be cursing your poor old girl as you endured the taunts of your schoolmates.

We're guessing your mum ain't packing your lunches for you anymore (or tucking you in at night... right?) But the contents of your lunchbox remain as pivotal to the outcome of your working day as they did years ago.

"Lunch stops you from overeating later in the day, fuels late-afternoon exercise sessions and keeps your blood-sugar constant, which will improve your concentration for the rest of the day," explains Simone Austin, a Melbourne dietitian and member of the Dietitians Association of Australia.

The first step in mastering this crucial meal is controlling what goes into it. That means packing it yourself – trust us, your mum's got better things to do. On that front, we've enlisted Dan Churchill, author of *Dude Food* and the *The Healthy Cook* to deliver a motherlode of lunch box recipes.

"Lunch is that moment in the middle of my day where, no matter what, I get super excited because it's another chance to be happy," Churchill says. "I get 'hangry', so I really look forward to all the epic nutrients that come with a well-thought-out packed lunch."

If Churchill's happy, you'll be freakin' ecstatic. These recipes may require a bit of prep the night before but, trust us, they'll revitalise your attitude towards packed lunches and help you take tangible steps towards improving your health, sculpting your physique and optimising your performance. Basically, you'll become a legend in your own lunchbox. →

THE DUDE'S PACKIN':

Dan Churchill, a former Masterchef contestant and now a cooking author, supplies the recipes that will lift your lunch break and make your day.





EMBRACE YOUR SALAD DAYS

Forget the tired rabbit-food clichés. These man-size salads will galvanise your health and make your abs pop



Roasted Vegetable Salad with Crusted Steak and Horseradish Sauce

YOU'LL NEED

For the salad

1 large sweet potato, peeled and roughly chopped
2 carrots, cut into uneven chunks
1 beetroot, peeled and cut into eighths
2 cloves of garlic
2 sprigs of thyme
1 sprig of rosemary
2 tbsp olive or coconut oil
Pinch of salt
Pinch of pepper
2 x 250g sirloin steak

For the horseradish sauce

1 tbsp horseradish cream
3 tbsp natural yoghurt
½ handful of fresh mint

WHAT TO DO

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Combine the sweet potato, carrots, beetroot, garlic, thyme, rosemary, half the oil, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Spread the vegies evenly on a tray lined with baking paper before sticking in the oven to cook for 18-20 minutes.

Combine all your sauce ingredients in a blender and pulse until mixed evenly; set aside. Season your steaks with salt and pepper. Add remaining oil to a griddle pan on high heat and add the steaks, turning every 15 seconds for 2-3 minutes for medium-rare. Mix with roasted vegies and the horseradish steak sauce. Serves 2.

Nutritional information per serving:

2465kJ, 60g protein, 35g carbohydrates, 25g fat (5g saturated), 14g sugar, 7g fibre, 410mg sodium

LUNCHBOX DIVIDEND

To beef up, look no further than beef. "This meal is an excellent source of protein and iron, which you need for the red blood cell development that helps carry oxygen around your body," says Austin. "The sweet potato is a slow-digesting carbohydrate that'll leave you feeling full, and the beetroot is rich in antioxidants, vitamin A and C." This may be the healthiest steak meal out there. →



Rocket, Watercress and Cashew Crunchy Chicken Salad

YOU'LL NEED

3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
Pinch of salt
Pinch of pepper
500g barbecue chicken
½ punnet grape tomatoes, halved
½ handful roasted cashews
1 handful of rocket
1 handful of watercress, roughly chopped
Juice of half a lemon

WHAT TO DO

In a large bowl whisk together olive oil and balsamic vinegar before seasoning with salt and pepper. Add the chicken, tomatoes and cashews and toss before adding the rocket and watercress. Separate into two plastic containers. Take one to work and refrigerate the other so you have lunch set to go for the next day. Serves 2.

Nutritional information per serving: 2010kJ, 54g protein, 9g carbohydrates, 25g fat (4.5g saturated), 3g sugar, 300mg sodium

LUNCHBOX DIVIDEND

Cashews are an easy way to jazz up chicken, adding flavour and function. "The nuts provide a solid hit of healthy fats, protein and fibre, as well as numerous micronutrients, such as zinc and magnesium," says Austin. "They're nutrient dense, but stick to the quantities outlined as they can be high in kilojoules."



"Ugly" Tomato Salad with Basil Oil

YOU'LL NEED

4-5 heirloom/ugly tomatoes
2 tbsp bocconcini
½ handful fresh basil
2 tbsp olive oil
1 garlic clove, roughly chopped
Juice of quarter of a lemon
Pinch of salt
1 tsp dried oregano
150g cooked chicken, chopped into bite-size pieces

WHAT TO DO

In a blender combine the basil, olive oil, garlic, lemon juice and salt. Mix until the ingredients "thin" out. Cut the tomatoes into uneven wedges and transfer to a bowl before sprinkling with oregano. Add bocconcini and chicken to the bowl. Finish by sprinkling tiny basil leaves over the top. Serves 1.

Nutritional information per serving: 2470kJ, 43g protein, 27g carbohydrates, 37g fat (7g saturated), 16g sugar, 7g fibre, 810mg sodium

LUNCHBOX DIVIDEND

This dish puts an end to empty kilojoules – and prejudice towards odd-shaped foods. "Despite their name, ugly tomatoes are absolutely beautiful and can make a tomato salad look spectacular," says Churchill. "They also wield diverse health benefits because the different pigments increase the diversity of micronutrients." Bottom line: you get an energy-boosting meal bursting with vitamins, minerals and nutrients.

HEAT IT, THEN EAT IT

Make these recipes at home the night before, then stick them in your work microwave for a steaming-hot lunch that's crammed full of flavour and goodness



Miso Soba Noodles with Sesame-Glazed Salmon

YOU'LL NEED

4 salmon fillets (200g each)
1 tbsp white miso paste
2 tbsp mirin
1 tbsp rice-wine vinegar
2 tsp tamari
1 tsp rice-malt syrup (optional)
1 tsp sesame oil
1 tsp salt
1 packet soba noodles
1 small bunch of baby bok choy, thinly sliced
1 bunch broccolini, roughly chopped
1 tsp ginger, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1 cup fish stock
Sesame seeds (for garnish)

WHAT TO DO

In a small bowl whisk the miso, mirin, rice-wine vinegar, tamari, sesame oil and rice-malt syrup together until the miso dissolves. Marinate salmon in the mixture for 30 minutes in the fridge. Preheat oven to 180°C. Cook salmon on a tray lined with baking paper for around 12 minutes. Bring a medium saucepan of water to the boil and add the soba noodles. Cook for five minutes before adding the broccolini. Cook for

two minutes before adding the bok choy for a further minute, then drain the contents into a colander. Heat remaining sesame oil in a saucepan on medium-high heat and fry the ginger and garlic for 2-3 minutes. Add the fish stock along with the drained noodles, bok choy and broccolini. Serve salmon in a bowl on top of noodles and vegies and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Serves 2-3.

Nutritional information per serving:

2675kJ, 64g protein, 49g carbohydrates, 20g fat (3g saturated), 4g sugar, 1830mg sodium

LUNCHBOX DIVIDEND

Fish is your weight-loss ally, but oily fish such as salmon takes it a step further. Research at Laval University found that the fatty acids and proteins from fish have a positive effect on maintaining and building muscle mass. More muscle means more kilojoules burnt during exercise. Bonus: it's as good for your brain as it is for your belt buckle. "Think of this as a magnificent comfort food full of amazing omega 3 brain food," says Churchill.



Country Chicken and Sweet Potato Pie

YOU'LL NEED

1kg chicken deboned or 600g chicken drumsticks
2 tsp salt
2 tbsp oil
1 onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 carrot, sliced
1 stick of celery, sliced
1 leek, finely sliced
1 cup chicken stock
2 tbsp white-wine vinegar
2 tsp black pepper, ground
3 sprigs thyme
2 sprigs rosemary
1 bay leaf
2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
¼ cup almond milk

WHAT TO DO

Preheat oven to 180°C. Place chicken on a lined baking tray, sprinkle with one teaspoon of salt, drizzle with oil and cook for 12-15 minutes. Remove from the oven and discard skin. Using two forks, shred the meat, making sure it's still chunky, then set aside.

In a medium saucepan brown the onion and garlic before adding the carrots, celery and leek. Next, add the chicken and stir for one minute before deglazing with the stock. Add white-wine vinegar, pepper, thyme, rosemary, bay leaf and remaining salt. Turn the heat to low, cover and simmer for 30-40 minutes. Meanwhile, in another pot bring the sweet potato to a boil then reduce heat and cook for a further 6-8 minutes. Drain and add to a blender with the almond milk, processing till smooth.

Preheat the grill to medium-high. Spoon the chicken mix into an ovenproof dish. Add the sweet potato mix on top and spread evenly. Grill for five minutes or until the top browns. Serves 3.

Nutritional information per serving: 1920kJ, 45g protein, 33g carbohydrates, 15g fat (3g saturated), 9g sugar, 5g fibre, 1860mg sodium

LUNCHBOX DIVIDEND

Sure, chicken's a rich protein source that'll leave you feeling fuller for longer, but it's the vinegar that's this meal's secret ingredient. Research in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that vinegar lowers your blood-glucose levels and insulin response, which means it'll leave you feeling satiated all afternoon. Like the vinegar flavour? Feel free to add a dash more.



Satay Chicken

YOU'LL NEED

500g chicken thighs, cut into 3cm cubes
2 tbsp lemon juice
Pinch of salt
300ml light coconut milk
1 long red chilli, seeds removed, sliced
1 tbsp honey
1 tsp garlic, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1 tsp soy sauce
100g organic crunchy peanut butter
2 cups brown rice
2 tsp lemongrass, finely chopped
1 tsp sesame oil
2 tsp sesame seeds

For steamed greens

1 bunch of bok choy, washed and ends cut off
1 bunch of Chinese broccoli, washed and ends cut off

WHAT TO DO

Combine lemon juice, salt, coconut milk, chilli and chicken in a bowl. Marinate for 1-2 hours. Drain chicken and keep marinade. In a frying pan on high heat brown the onion and garlic before adding the chicken and cooking for 3-5 minutes. Add the marinade and stir for one minute before adding the honey, soy sauce and peanut butter. Constantly stir to break up the peanut butter, then turn heat to low and cook for 10 minutes to slightly thicken.

Add rice, lemongrass and sesame oil with 3½ cups of water to a medium saucepan covered on high heat. Bring to a boil then turn to low to simmer for 15 minutes.

To serve, spoon rice onto a plate or into a plastic container, followed by the chicken and satay sauce and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Serve with steamed greens. Serves 3.

LUNCHBOX DIVIDEND

To add muscle you need plenty of high-quality kilojoules, which can prove a chore if you're eating too much of the same foods. "This meal beats boredom by adding great flavours thanks to the herbs and spices, which also provide valuable nutrients," explains Austin. Consider this lunchbox filler a bullseye for your daily nutrient balance. →

Nutritional

information per serving: 3640 kJ, 53g protein, 63g carbohydrates, 48g fat (23g saturated), 12g sugar, 13g fibre, 720mg sodium

STACK IT, THEN SMASH IT

Whip these sandwich ingredients up the night before, wrap 'em in the morning, then leave your colleagues drooling while you savour the flavours



The Ultimate Steak Sandwich

YOU'LL NEED

Olive oil
2 onions, finely sliced
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tsp honey
500g skirt steak
1/2 avocado, thinly sliced
1/4 cup cottage cheese (optional)
Handful of rocket or spinach
2 ciabatta rolls

WHAT TO DO

Heat a tablespoon of oil in a saucepan on medium heat and brown the onions; 5-7 minutes. Add balsamic vinegar, turning the heat to low and drizzling with honey; cook for a further five minutes. Season the steak on both sides with salt and pepper 10 minutes before cooking. Add one tablespoon of oil to the steak and transfer to a griddle pan on high heat. Turn every 15 seconds for 2-3 minutes before transferring to a preheated oven; cook for a further five minutes. Remove from the oven, cover with foil and rest for five minutes.

Toast your ciabatta rolls underneath the grill and slice your steaks against the grain of the muscle fibres to maximise tenderness. To serve, spread your avocado on the bottom of the ciabatta, then layer on some rocket before adding slices of steak and spooning over your onions. Finish off with cottage cheese and the top layer of ciabatta. Serves 2-3.

Nutritional information per serving: 3050kJ, 43g protein, 52g carbohydrates, 39g fat (12g saturated), 10g sugar, 4g fibre, 460mg sodium

LUNCHBOX DIVIDEND

This one could be your weekend cheat meal as it does require a bit of prep and is best eaten straight from the pan. "It has an excellent focus on the vegetables with some lean protein in the steak, calcium in the cottage cheese, and healthy fats in the avocado," says Austin. "These give you the micronutrients for general health and wellbeing as well as macronutrients to ensure your brain is firing on all cylinders." Eating is definitely cheating. →



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1 in 5

Number of people who don't take a lunch break at work, citing a busy workload.

Source: The Australian Institute

FOUR

Percentage of workers who take their lunch with them to work each day.

Source: The Australian Institute

50

Percentage of Aussie workers who spend \$20 or more each week on lunch. That's at least \$1000 a year.

Source: McCrindle Research

26

The number of sandwiches sold every second in Australia.

Source: sandwich.org.au

Chicken

The most popular sandwich filling.

Source: sandwich.org.au



Herbed Chicken Wrap

YOU'LL NEED

Juice of half a lemon
1 tsp dried thyme
1 tsp dried oregano
1 tsp dried marjoram
Salt and black pepper
500g skinless chicken breast
Olive oil
1 medium sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1cm cubes
1 avocado, pitted, peeled and sliced
3 wholemeal wraps
Cottage cheese (optional)

WHAT TO DO

In a bowl, mix the lemon juice, thyme, oregano and marjoram with a pinch of salt and pepper. Add the chicken and toss to coat. In a frying pan, heat oil over high heat. Add the chicken and cook until tender (2-3 minutes) before transferring to a plate. Add the remaining oil to the same pan. Add sweet potato, sprinkle with some salt and pepper and stir until the cubes are soft; 5-6 minutes. Refrigerate ingredients overnight.

In the morning, divide the avocado evenly among the wraps. Place two teaspoons of cottage cheese on top, along with a handful of rocket. Evenly divide the sweet potato and the chicken among the wraps. Fold the two ends of the wrap together and roll up like a burrito, tucking the sides in as you go. Eat fresh or toast in a sandwich press for two minutes. Serves 3.

Nutritional information per serving:

2300kJ, 41g protein, 43g carbohydrates, 24g fat (4g saturated), 5g sugar, 6g fibre, 570mg sodium

LUNCHBOX DIVIDEND

To make sure you're flush with nutrients that'll promote weight loss minus the hunger pangs, it's important you master the ratio of your sandwich fillings. "Always make them with around half of your filling coming from salads or vegetables," says Austin. "This helps achieve fullness, improves your nutrient intake and contributes to the RDI of five servings of vegies a day – ideal for weight loss."



Kale Burrito Wrap

YOU'LL NEED

2 kale leaves, stems removed
2 short-cut bacon rashers
2 eggs
¼ avocado
Olive oil
2 tbsp tahini
2 tbsp lemon juice
2 garlic cloves
Pinch of salt

WHAT TO DO

Preheat an oven to 180°C. Wrap garlic in aluminium foil with a little oil and pinch of salt and heat for 20 minutes or until soft. Next, drizzle a little oil onto a frying pan on high heat and cook the bacon on each side for 2-3 minutes, then remove. In a small bowl, whisk the eggs until light and pour directly onto the frypan. Move the eggs around the pan to expand the circle before using a spatula to get underneath to loosen. Cook for 1-2 minutes before rolling up like a rug.

In a small bowl, combine the tahini and lemon juice, then squeeze the flesh of the garlic from the skin – it should be very squishy – and mix until combined. Refrigerate overnight.

In the morning, overlap two kale leaves, layer with the rolled-up egg, top with bacon and the avocado, and drizzle on the tahini sauce. Fold the ends in, then roll into a neat burrito. Serves 1.

Nutritional information per serving: 2630kJ, 36g protein, 21g carbohydrates, 47g fat (11g saturated), 1g sugar, 5g fibre, 830mg sodium

LUNCHBOX DIVIDEND

If you're sporting muscular ambitions, you shouldn't limit eggs to the AM. Despite their cholesterol content, they're an all-day food that'll boost the size of your biceps. Indeed, research at Texas A&M University found people with higher cholesterol intake also had the highest gains in muscle strength. "I often crave the ability to eat bacon and eggs squeezed between my hands," says Churchill. You too? Crave no more.



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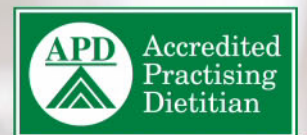
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► **Taking risks**
Steve, on top of his
house, has learned
when to back off.



THE MAN WHO FEE



BORN WITH A GENETIC MUTATION, STEVE PETE AND HIS YOUNGER BROTHER CHRIS LACKED THE CAPACITY TO FEEL PHYSICAL PAIN. BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP THEM FROM SUFFERING

BY OLIVER BROUDY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF RIEDEL

LS NO PAIN

I almost killed him in Wyoming. Steve Pete and his brother, Chris, were just outside the mining town of Gillette, in the north-eastern corner of the US state. They were at the tail end of a road trip to a motorcycle rally. They'd just rolled out of a strip bar called Bryan's Place. Steve had been nursing a coffee since midnight, chatting to the owner. But Chris kept drinking.

You might ask: what could make a man so angry he'd want to kill his younger brother? "He punched me in the face while I was driving!" says Steve, the familiar exasperation flaring up all these years later.

There will always be something special about fights between brothers, a certain intimacy and conviction to the violence. But the fights of Steve and Chris Pete were the stuff of legend. "We had fights in the back of a truck driving down a logging road," Steve says, "hitting each other with metal bars. I almost killed him that night, too, because I grabbed a chain and I wrapped it around his neck and I threw him off the back of the truck."

Yep, that's extreme, even for brothers. But Steve and Chris were no ordinary brothers. They were both born with a rare mutation in their SCN9A gene, leaving them incapable of feeling physical pain. Once a fight got going, their bodies never gave them a reason to stop. A punch in the face was just a way of getting someone's attention.

Their condition is called congenital insensitivity to pain, or CIP. The mutation that causes it was discovered relatively recently, and a study was published in 2006 in *Nature*, after a story surfaced about a 10-year-old in Pakistan who performed street theatre by sticking knives through his arms and walking on hot coals. By the time researchers arrived to investigate, the kid had died. He'd jumped off a roof. They identified the gene mutations in the child's extended family.

Steve Pete didn't attract attention until 2012, after someone from a science museum in England invited him to participate in a pain-themed exhibit. In medical circles, cases of such rarity or exoticism are referred to as "fascinomas". Often they're just an occasion for gawking. But in Steve's case, says Dr Stephen Waxman, the attention might well be warranted.

Unusual medical cases and genetic abnormalities can lead to pharmaceutical breakthroughs. Statin drugs, for example, "have their origins in studies of rare families where everyone was having heart attacks in their twenties", says Waxman, a professor of neurology at Yale School of Medicine.

Guys like the Pete brothers could be the key to unlocking a new generation of pain blockers that have all the potency of opioids but none of the undesirable side effects, says Waxman. "That's the Holy Grail of pain research."

For Steve, life as a fascinoma has had much to recommend it. When he was growing up, kids admired him because he would do the things they only dreamed of doing. Leap from a tree with a tattered umbrella "parachute", for instance. When he went mountain biking, no-one but his brother Chris could keep up with him. Sometimes they'd cover 120 kilometres a day. And when a couple of toughs were foolish enough to challenge him to a game of cigarette chicken, going forearm to forearm with a lit cigarette between, Steve won both times.

Hearing the stories, you can't help but be fascinated. Maybe because in Steve, the love we feel for loud explosions and sharp knives and high places is so gloriously uncomplicated. Or maybe because, in being impervious to life's greatest source of misery, he's halfway to being that which we all wish we could be – indestructible. →

THE MAN WHO FEELS NO PAIN

We attune ourselves to him. As much as there is to be learned about pain from studying someone who has never felt it, there may be more to be learned about human nature from someone who is missing one of its more human components.

This is also why the story reads like a Greek tragedy. Because by the time Steve Pete came to understand his own nature, it was too late. By then the damage had been done. By then a set of headlights had already swept across the body in the barn.

There are downsides to a life without pain. When a new kid moved to town, someone would tell Steve, “Go fight that guy”. Some fights were broken up, but he never lost. Because he never hesitated and never stopped. “You just don’t care if you get hit,” he says. “If someone throws a punch at you, you don’t have to pull away.”

Feeling no pain, he felt no fear. Once, when he sliced his forearm open while working with wood, he saved himself a doctor’s visit by stitching the wound himself. When he broke two bones in his foot after drunkenly vaulting a couch at a party, the remedy was duct tape and a stiff boot. “I had to work that day,” he explains.

Doctors, naturally, were fascinated – and sometimes disbelieving, especially when he declined anaesthesia. “I had one dentist who was shaking because he thought he was gonna hurt me.”

With fear removed, you see what a head game pain can be. “If pain didn’t have an emotional component to it,” says Dr Allan Basbaum, a professor of anatomy at the University of California, San Francisco, “it wouldn’t be pain; it would just be sensation.”

The emotional correlates of pain are threaded through our lives. And they aren’t always negative. Think of the deep satisfaction you feel on completing an agonising workout. Or the *esprit de corps* that shared pain can produce among teammates. Pain can sharpen our attention, facilitate empathy, even heighten our capacity for pleasure in certain instances.

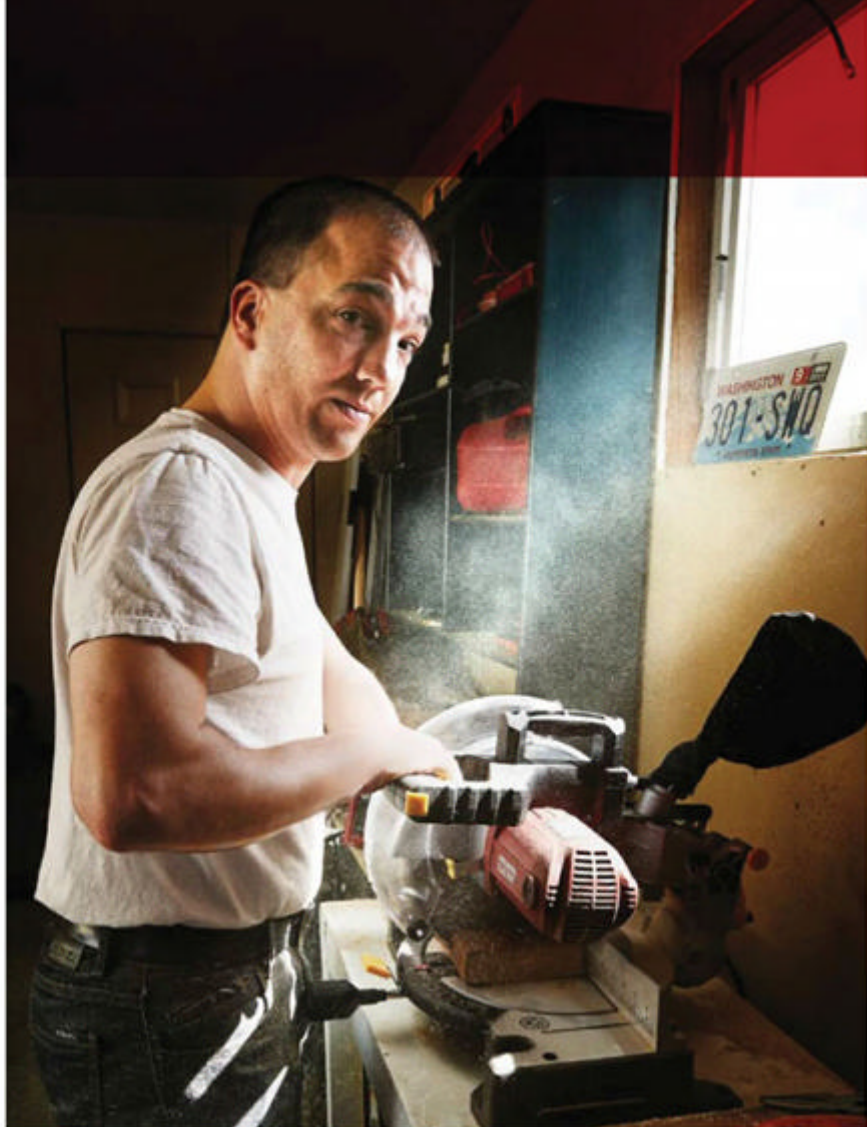
Stripped of pain, Steve’s injuries never gave rise to the associated emotions that usually imbue pain with meaning. Which may explain why he has such a hard time remembering the injuries. “My memory is shot,” he says. “I can hardly recall anything.”

Occasionally his wife will run into someone who knew him growing up and who is haunted by some traumatic event that Steve can’t recall. Like that time he jumped off a swing in grade school. “His bone was just kind of, like, hanging out of his leg,” the woman told his wife, “and he’s just standing there laughing.”

Laughter, actually, is something you hear often from Steve. And why not? Take the pain away and the world becomes a much funnier place. A world without pain is basically slapstick.

“I do enjoy slapstick,” he says. “Like the Three Stooges – not the new one, of course; the new one sucks.” In early photos, actually, Steve bears a resemblance to Moe – same blocky features, same bowl haircut. Now, with short hair, he has more of a dented look, like a veteran hockey enforcer. There’s a stump where a tooth has gone missing. (“I guess it just rotted and fell out.”)

We all loved the Stooges. But you have to wonder whether Steve’s ignorance of pain has made it harder for him to relate to others. His wife, for instance, suffers from migraines. “He’s getting better,” she says. “He doesn’t laugh at me anymore. But with other people, he’ll laugh.”



When he was a kid, Steve would go coyote hunting with a .22. Each pair of ears was worth a \$20 bounty, and on a good night a guy could make real money, popping the animals one by one as the lantern picked their glowing eyes out of the dark. The trick was the bait – a rabbit with a foot chopped off. “It squeals in pain, and when the coyotes hear that, it attracts them,” Steve says. “Then you just start shooting.”

Philosophers have long wrestled with the question of whether you need to feel pain in order to understand the pain of others. Several years ago, researchers from France and Canada teamed up to try to settle the question. Rounding up 12 people who were, like the Pete brothers, unable to feel pain since birth, they showed a series of clips – everything from a dog biting a man’s face to a missed jump from a diving board – in which the people’s pain-related behaviours, like facial expressions, for instance, were omitted. The study, published in the journal *Brain*, found the subjects significantly underestimated the pain of the people in the video. Bear in mind, even those with a normal sense of pain tend to underestimate the pain of others. (Doctors and other health care professionals, of all people, are prone to this, research shows.)

Pain is private. As one scholar wrote: “To have great pain is to have certainty; to hear that another person has pain is to have doubt.”

Growing up with Chris, Steve never had to worry that he might be missing something, that Chris might somehow be suffering in a way he couldn’t understand.

▲ **Feeling his way**
Steve Pete in his home workshop. His sense of touch is normal, but he doesn’t know pain.



▲ **Ready for anything**
Chris and Steve, sporting a black eye, during their rough-and-tumble childhood.

Then again, Chris never seemed to have a problem with empathy. "He was a lot more empathic," Janette Pete says.

That's Chris and Steve's mum talking. We're back at the farm, a nine-hectare spread in the timbered Pacific Northwest hills where the brothers grew up and where their parents still live today. The front porch overlooks a steep grade that the boys used to roll down inside an old metal oil drum. Alongside that runs a driveway, where they took turns lying on the gravel, using each other's heads for a ramp.

Chris was always the quiet one. He could lose himself for hours inscribing tribal emblems on the head of a handmade drum, his mother says. And he would then give it to you without a second thought. "Chris was always fishing and hunting," she says. When they took Steve fishing, he'd lie at the bottom of the boat, pull a tarp over himself, and go to sleep.

Steve was reckless, headlong, the kind of kid who stuck keys in electric outlets because he liked the tingle that shot up his arm. "I like electricity," he says. "I still like it. Like electrical fences, it's cool if you grab it because you can feel the pulse."

There's a Pete family rule: don't follow Steve. Even Chris learned to stand back and watch. Like that time 10 centimetres of snow fell and they climbed with a sledge to the roof of the barn. "I just dropped and landed on my back with the sledge right on top of me," Steve says. "And the ground I hit was as solid as rock." He didn't go to the hospital but had a hard time breathing for a couple of weeks after that. He suspects he cracked some ribs.

Today Steve's body carries the toll of this punishment. He has severe arthritis, for instance. He can't feel it, but sometimes his fingers lock up and he has to physically wrench them open. "I also found out I have two fractured vertebrae," he says. "My T8 and my T9. The doctor said it happened 12 months ago. I have no idea how. He asked me if I did any bungee jumping or was in a car wreck." Steve's not too concerned about the fractures. "That can be repaired," he says.

His biggest problem now is his knee, which is giving out – perhaps from all the times he jumped from trees and roofs and landed straight-legged. You can see it in the way he walks, with his knee canted inward, as if it's about to buckle. Which it is.

As Dr Frank Vertosick Jr points out in his book, *Why We Hurt: The Natural History of Pain*, there's no structural reason our joints can't bend in both directions. "As we take each step, subtle pain sensations provide our muscles with the information they need to keep the joints in the correct alignment," he writes.

So pain does more than just warn us away from hot stoves. It also transmits a steady whisper of data to help us use our bodies. This may explain why retired NFL players, who are often encouraged to ignore pain, are more than three times as likely as the general population to develop early onset osteoarthritis. And it's also why, in a 2011 study, six per cent of retired NFL footballers surveyed (average age: 48) require the use of a stick, walker or wheelchair.

The very existence of pain speaks volumes about our place in evolution's hierarchy, Vertosick argues. Unlike a centipede, for instance, we have almost no physical redundancy – just as many limbs as we require, and no more. This makes our bodies highly efficient but also highly perishable. And that perishability is not offset by the knack for mass reproduction. The amount of pain we feel, in other words, and the intelligence we use to interpret that pain, directly reflects our value to



WHY STEVE DOESN'T FEEL PAIN

A mutated gene jams electrical charges that normally send pain signals

Pain is not simply an exaggeration of touch; it has its own pathway to the brain, a specific sodium channel sub-type in nerve cells called NaV1.7. When you cut your finger, for instance, nerve endings open the channels so positively charged sodium ions can flow through. These ions set off an electrical charge that signals pain to your brain.

Nerve cells have several subtypes of sodium channels serving different purposes. Steve Pete has a flaw in the gene that controls NaV1.7, keeping the channel closed so the signal never occurs.

A shot of local anaesthetic blocks all channels, so you feel no pain, no heat, no cold – nothing. Researchers hope to develop drugs that can target specific channels.

– By Alex Gardner

the species. The Pete brothers grew up like centipedes, behaving as if they had an infinite supply of limbs. Part of Janette's job was to teach them that they didn't. Spanking clearly wouldn't work. Instead, she'd squirt them with a water bottle, as if they were squabbling cats.

Sitting on her front porch, Janette taps a cigarette and cackles, her talk still full of vitriol at the legions of sceptical doctors, dimwitted schoolteachers and sanctimonious child-protection agents that she's had to deal with. But somewhere behind this complacent façade you can sense the anguish of a mother who can't be sure she struck the right balance between protecting her boys and letting them run free.

Even though Steve was more reckless, it always seemed like Chris was the one who paid the dearer price, which he brought on himself. "Chris did body contortions," Janette says. "He'd throw his legs up over his head backward. It gave me the chills."

"I used to love to watch him do that," Steve chuckles.

"He would egg him on!" Janette says.

Janette was the only one who could come between the brothers when they started fighting. It was the usual stuff. Steve, the older brother, was always bossing Chris around. And Chris usually rolled with it. But every now and then he'd rebel, and all hell would break loose. After they'd fight, Janette would make them sit with their arms around each other until they made up. "I said, 'I tell you what, if you guys are ever fighting and I come home and find one of you dead, the other one might as well kiss their butt goodbye because you're gonna be dead too'."

There's always a moment when the warring we are born to moves on to new battlefields, when shared history outweighs the aggravation, and brothers actually become valuable to each other. For Steve and Chris Pete, the moment came a few miles outside Gillette. By that point, Chris had never needed his big brother more. He'd started drinking when he was about 19, around the time Steve started spending more time with his girlfriend. By his mid-twenties, Chris had already been through several detox programs.

The drinking may have been his way of coping as his body began to break down. Years of slouching in school had deformed his spine, and as his vertebrae chewed into his spinal cord he lost the use of one arm. Semi-paralysed, he couldn't work. Nor, says Janette, was he allowed to receive disability, since, by the reasoning of one judge anyway, he wasn't actually in pain.

Steve struggled too, with his arthritis and buckled knee. But even if the leg had to come off, it wouldn't mean the loss of what he most valued in life – his wife and kids. And video games. Both brothers had played video games as kids. It was one of the few ways they kept sane during their many long hospital stays.

Steve had gone on to become a serious gamer – the mayhem of first-person shooters suited him. The violence could not be desensitising to one who already felt nothing. And no matter how many times you got shot, blown up or stabbed in the neck with a combat knife, the biggest impact was only on your fingertips.

But Chris still preferred the stillness of the woods to the mania of video games. It was only there that he could actually hear himself. As his body gave out, though, the woods were becoming ever more inaccessible to him. It was only a matter of time, doctors said, before he'd be in a wheelchair. So he kept drinking and turned inward, like he always did. It had to come to a head eventually. And when it did, his brother was there.



▲ **Bung hinge**
A lifetime of
recklessness and
unfelt injuries has
left Steve's left knee
weak and unstable.

"I picked him up from somewhere when he was drunk," Steve says. "I told him, 'If you don't change the way you live, you're not going to be there to teach my kids all the things I can't teach them. I'm not into hunting or fishing or anything like that. And you are. So I expect you to be the one to teach my kids that stuff.'"

It was his best shot, and Steve let him have it. It was also exactly the kind of bossy big-brother move Chris used to hate. In the past, he might have reached across and socked him. And Steve might've pulled over, wrapped the seatbelt around Chris's neck, and commenced punching his lights out. But Steve and Chris Pete's fighting days were over. In a way, they'd been replaced by something even more terrible. Because if there's one thing worse than a fight between brothers, it's the fight a man wages against himself.

The shattered hulk of Mount St Helens broods beneath an overcast sky near Castle Rock, Washington, the small town where Steve and Chris Pete grew up. When the volcano erupted in 1980, one year before Steve was born, it dropped a metre of ash on his parents' house. Today, as the magma recharges, volcanoes remain one of the few things (along with appendicitis and, of course, sharks) that Steve actually fears.

Now rain tickles the windshield as we wind slowly through the stands of cedar and Douglas fir, hoping for a view of the landmark. As kids, Steve and Chris used to come up here all the time. It was the kind of place Chris loved – all wind and distance and silence. Steve talks as he drives: "Part of me wishes my brother could have stuck with it for a while and fought through. It's kind of a selfish thing to ask, though, because I know he was going through his own little hell inside his own head..."

Steve got the call from his father, who came home from work one Thursday and found Chris hanging in the barn. "After that it was just kind of like autopilot," Steve recalls. He remembers talking to the chaplain, and the coroner's van disappearing down the driveway. "I was thinking, 'Damn, this is the last time he's gonna be... the last time he's leaving the house', you know?" Steve says. "After that, even days after that, it was just kind of foggy. Just kind of like living in disbelief."

That was nearly six years ago. Steve hasn't jumped off any roofs since. "Once Chris passed, I really started to slow things down a lot more," he says.

None of Steve's three children inherited his inability to feel pain, since his wife doesn't carry the mutated gene. His job keeps him out of trouble. And every now and then he flies to London to help a leading pain researcher sort out the science that may one day give relief to others who suffer.

The research on people like Steve – and on certain animals with pain-related superpowers – may someday lead to drugs that target the specific nerve pathways, or sodium channels, that send pain signals to the brain. Some centipedes and spiders produce venom that may block that pain channel in humans. There's also the southwestern grasshopper mouse, which can stop the transmission of pain signals caused by the venom of bark scorpions.

The hope is for calibrated pharmaceuticals that relieve chronic pain while still allowing acute pain to be felt. Because if Steve's story tells us anything, it's that pain serves a purpose.

We may wish we didn't have to feel it; we might wish we could leap from a tree with an umbrella and keep on going. But it's either man meets limit and overcomes, or man meets limit and takes a left. Some of our ambitions are by nature lethal. To leap, soar, scale great heights. It's up to us to figure out how much caution to use, and when recklessness is still warranted. To distinguish between good pain and bad pain. And to endlessly recalibrate to make the absolute most of our mortal limits.

For Steve, painlessness is itself the limit. Not that he would ever want to be free of it, even if technology could somehow magically make that possible.

Call him a slow learner, but Steve still hopes to bungee jump one day. Closer to earth, he's pursuing the interest he's always had in electronics, scouring the internet for damaged iPhones, tablets, laptops and TVs that he can repair in his workshop. His most recent acquisition is a router that will help him integrate electronics into woodwork. As for that busted leg of his, if the time does come to amputate, he looks forward to equipping his prosthesis with a custom iPod dock.

Now, as the road winds ever higher towards the mountain lookout, the rain thickens into snow that woos the windows and whitens the tiered eaves of the evergreens. When they were young, Steve and Chris used to come up here and have snowball fights, packing the snow tight with their bare hands until the skin dried and cracked and stained the snow red.

Steve was watching old footage from those days recently. He can see Chris, who was about 12 at the time, writing in the snow with a stick.

"It said, 'Chris was here'," Steve says.

The snow comes down in a white whisper. Suddenly all colour is gone and he's fighting again, fighting the pain of his lost brother. Which is odd. Because he's really not supposed to feel pain. Technically, he shouldn't be able to feel pain at all.

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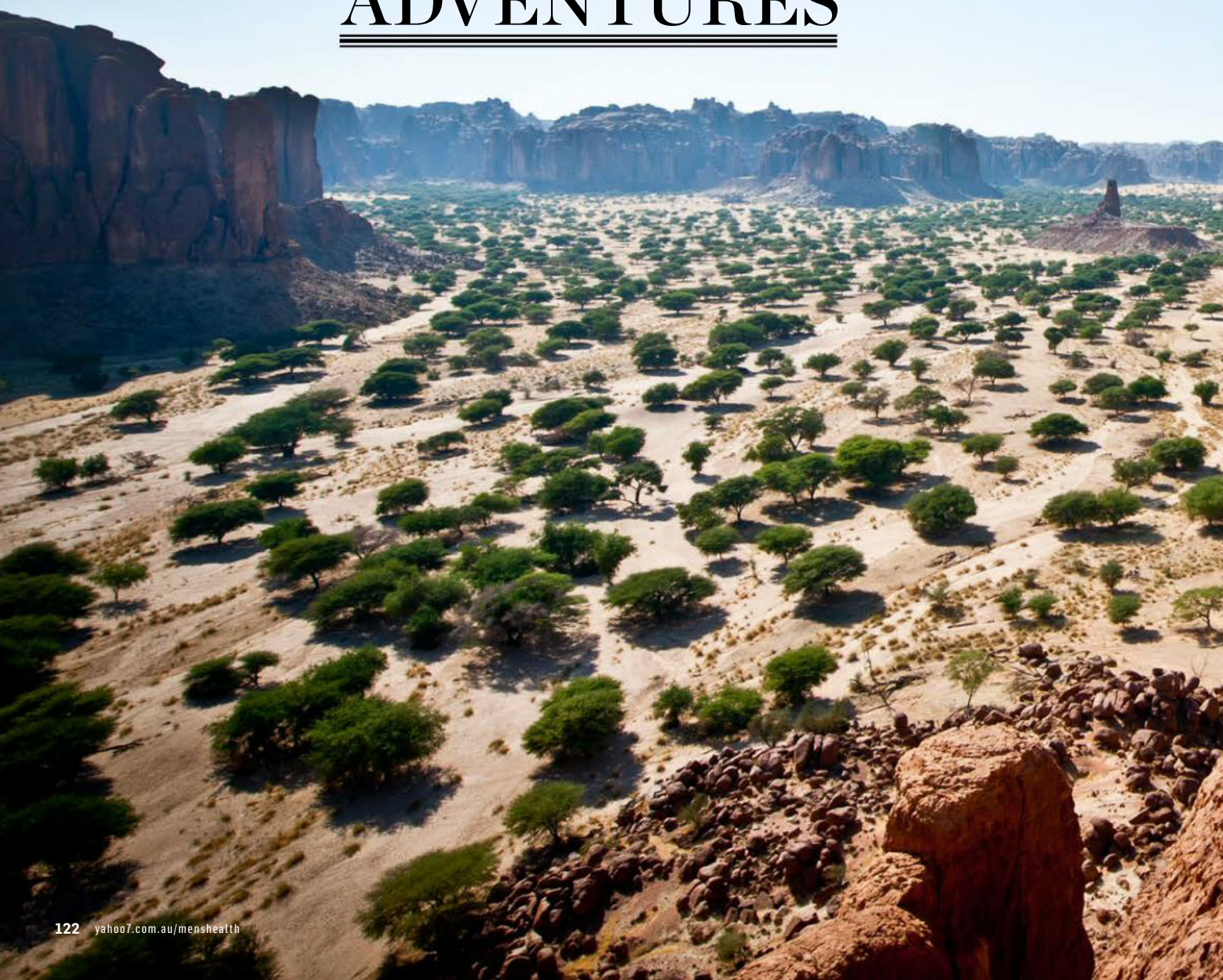
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01-02

SAIL ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Peru's Lake Titicaca is the world's highest commercially navigable lake and the birthplace of the Incan empire. Raise your mainsail to explore the haunting structures of pre-Incan burial ground Sillustani and meet the Uros people on their floating islands.

(*five nights from \$4830; inkas.com*)

Like That? Strengthen your sea legs closer to home by hoisting a sail on Sydney Harbour.

(*\$190; ultimatesailing.com.au*)

03-04

BECOME A MASAI WARRIOR

Follow in Dr Livingstone's footsteps with a 12-day adventure through the heart of the Mbarika Mountains of Tanzania. Local Masai act as your guide, teaching you tracking techniques, survival tips and bamboo boat-making. You'll cover 15-25 kilometres a day, soak up stunning views of sub-Saharan Africa and even tackle rapids (with one eye on the local crocs, of course).

(*From \$29,540; epictomato.com*)

Like That? Take a trekking and rafting trip into the scarcely explored Western Province of Papua New Guinea.

(*From \$18,730; epictomato.com*)

05-06

CYCLE THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS ROAD

Take a sheer mountain drop, carve a road across its face and, presto, you have the Camión de la Muerte, Bolivia's "death road". It's 64km long and drops 3596m as it winds downhill from La Paz, passing grazing llamas and rocky overhangs. Vistas of the snow-dusted Andes give way to jungle so lush you'll struggle to keep your eyes on the road. Just don't look down.

(*From \$141; viator.com*)

Like That? Sure, it's not quite as extreme, but L'Étape du Tour gives amateur cyclists a bite-size version of the Tour de France.

(*From \$5496; trektravel.com*)

07-08

UNWIND IN A TURKISH COTTON CASTLE

Pamukkale (literal translation: "cotton castles") in south-western Turkey are a series of warm pools so luxurious they've gained World Heritage status. Hot calcium-laden waters spring from the earth and cascade over a cliff, leaving salt-white baths for you to indulge in, Tony Soprano-style. Just make sure you choose the right one – temperatures range from a tepid 35°C to a scorching 90°C-plus.

(*From \$70; goreme.com*)

Like That? It ain't a castle but you'll feel like a king at Australia's oldest and most iconic bathhouse in the picturesque Victorian town of Daylesford.

(*From \$99; hepburnbathhouse.com*)

09-10

Ride a terrifyingly fast zip line

Ready to be an action-movie hero? Try hurtling down the world's most extreme zip line. Stretching 180 metres above New Zealand's scenic Gravity Canyon, this zip will send you soaring as you reach a speed-fine-securing velocity of 160km/h – the fastest in the world. So yes, you'll want to make sure breakfast is settled before you let'er rip. And, um, zip. (*From \$155; gravitycanyon.co.nz*)

Like That? Zip 2000 in South Africa's Sun City offers the world's longest zip line, with a ride that spans 2000m over scenic grasslands. (*From \$57; zip2000.com*)



11-15

TOP FIVE TOUGH TREKS

CLIMB SOUTH-EAST ASIA'S HIGHEST PEAK

At 4095m, Mount Kinabalu is definitely in South-East Asia's nosebleed section. A three-day hike will get you up to the jagged summit, staying at lodges in the national park – home to half of the world's flowering plant species. That should take the "lazy" out of Malaysia. (*From \$630; marimari.com*)

HIKE THE WORLD'S GREATEST ULTRA-MARATHON TRAIL

It takes the planet's greatest runners just 20 hours to complete the entire 170km circumnavigation of Mont Blanc, but this trek around Europe's mightiest mountain will take you eight days, with a few diversions on the way and nights spent in a variety of mountainside huts.

(*From \$2090; rawtravel.com*)

BATTLE THROUGH THE WILDS OF MONGOLIA

If the thought of experiencing life as a nomadic reindeer herder appeals, this 18-night trek and ski is for you. Finish with a two-day Ice Festival, which includes ice wrestling, horse sledge races and a tug-of-war. (*From \$5999; epictomato.com*)

GET CLOSE TO A VOLCANO

Head for Hawaii to say aloha to the Kilauea volcano. It's been erupting and gurgling since 1983, spewing out up to 600,000 cubic metres of lava every day. (*From \$279; viator.com*)

TREK GLACIERS IN PATAGONIA

Hike across the incredible glacial landscape of Argentina and Chile. You'll cross mountains, ice fields and lakes. Hey, just go with the flow. (*From \$4045; intrepidtravel.com*)



16-17

NEGOTIATE RAPIDS IN SWEDEN

Real hipsters wear plaid; real lumberjacks wear plaid *and* build their own log rafts. This is genuine chest-beating territory – roll two tonnes of spruce logs down to the water before securing with rope and hopping aboard your raft. Then float 96km down the forest-lined Klarälven, working your upper body as you negotiate the river.

(Eight days from \$490; vildmark.se)

Like That? Brave the raging rapids of south-east France's Isère River with nothing more than a torso-length foam floater for protection.

(From \$78 for a half day; coureurs-rivieres.com)

18-19

FIND ETERNAL YOUTH IN COSTA RICA

Costa Rica was recently named in the Blue Zones Project as one of the hotspots for a long, healthy life, with more centenarians than anywhere else on earth. Dip into their lifestyle at the Asclepios Wellness and Healing Retreat.

(From \$270 per night; asclepioscr.com)

Like That? A few hours in the healing waters of Terme di Saturnia in Tuscany and you'll be a veritable Dorian Gray.

(From \$32 for a spa day ticket; termedisaturnia.it)

20-21

TAKE POLE POSITION

Few people ever get to visit the Antarctic Circle, but on a 12-day visit aboard the Sea Adventurer you'll get the opportunity to put boot to snow – and even camp – on one of the most remote places on earth, keeping an eye out for seal-snatching killer whales.

(12 days from \$9995; cruiseantarctica.com.au)

Like That? Now try the other pole, with a 14-day icebreaker expedition to the North Pole.

(From \$32,415; quarkexpeditions.com)

22-23

SKI THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

The biggest highs come from Alaskan powder. Black runs have nothing on properly off-piste heli-skiing. From Chugach you'll be dumped among 3000 square kilometres of virgin powder to carve your own trails. Rolling deep-powder runs, tree-dodging routes, alpine summit ramps – however you want it, *extreme* is the word.

(One day from \$1470; chugachpowderguides.com)

Like That? Not quite so gnarly – but culturally off-piste, at least – try skiing and dogsledding in Norway under the Northern Lights. *(From \$267; lyngsfjord.com)*

24-25

SEE THE OCEAN GLOW ON THE BARRIER REEF

With more than 2900 individual reefs, the Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral system and one of the best places in the world to dive. Look out for marine life that glows in a way you only thought possible in Pixar films. It's very existence is under threat, though, so see it while it's still here.

(Three days from \$690; prodivercairns.com)

Like That? Explore the underwater caves of Khao Sok National Park in southern Thailand. *(From \$190; protechdivers.com)*



26-27

ROCK CLIMB IN THAILAND

Indoor climbing walls and warehouses converted to bouldering amphitheatres are all well and good, but you can't beat the real thing. And it doesn't get more real than rock climbing in southern Thailand. Where else can your carabiner attract the inquisitive glances of langurs, gibbons and monitor lizards? As exotic climbs go, this is, er, tops. (From \$1900; rockandsun.com)

Like That? Test your skills at Mt Arapiles, 340km west of Melbourne. It boasts more than 2500 climbs, from beginner circuits to stomach-lurching rock faces. Plus, you can camp for \$2 a night! (arapiles.com.au)

28-29

GET FERAL ON HINCHINROOK ISLAND

As Australia's largest island national park, Hinchinbrook Island trades on solitude and scenery. Trek through lush mangrove forests, spot dugongs, and relax on uninhabited white, sandy beaches. Forget your troubles, grow a beard, lose your mind – it's all good.

(From \$5pp per day; qld.gov.au/camping)

Like That? There are 8000 islands in the archipelago near Gothenburg, on Sweden's west coast. Hire a kayak and paddle out, then stay where you like. Some islands even boast saunas. (From \$77 for one day's kayak hire; vastsverige.com)

30-31

LIVE IN A CENTRAL AMERICAN TREEHOUSE

In Costa Rica, they've managed to marry your dream childhood den with contemporary comforts. The Tree House Lodge is only accessible via a sloped wooden suspension bridge. Inside there's a king-size bed . . . and a single bed in case you argue over who's having the mosquito net. From your base, you can canoe, tramp through the jungle or seek out the pink Amazonian river dolphin. (From \$380 for two people; costaricatreehouse.com)

Like That? Colder, but just as magical: head to Arctic Finland and see the Northern Lights from a glass igloo. (From \$665; kaksilauttanen.fi)

32-33

RUN A QUADRATHLON IN ST LUCIA

Not every beach holiday is about getting flabby on piña coladas. St Lucia's LeSport challenges its guests to a weekly quadrathlon challenge, where you'll mountain bike 12km on dirt trails, run 4km up jungle hills, abseil 30m and kayak 2.5km. Now you've earned that fruity cocktail. (\$110; thebodyholiday.com)

Like That? For a less exotic but still beautiful sweat pilgrimage, try the Port Stephens Triathlon. (From \$185; eliteenergy.com.au)

34-35

GO WILD WITH THE SAS

Ex-SAS troopers doubling as guides highlight the extreme nature of this 14-day voyage into the jungles of Guyana. Your survival-skills menu includes foraging for food, and hunting with a bow and arrow. Just keep an eye out for elusive anacondas.

(From \$18,720 epictomato.com)

42-47

SIX FITNESS FILL-UPS

BOOTCAMP IN THE BALEARICS

It's goodbye glow sticks, hello dumbbells for this week-long Ibiza bootcamp. A typical day begins when many on the island are heading to bed. Circuits, hikes, swim sets, boxing, hill training and yoga will help you shed weight fast. (From \$5150; healthandfitnesstravel.com.au)

RELAX IN CYPRUS

If you prefer your bootcamp to be more Tom Ford than op shop chic, pick the Aphrodite Hills Resort Hotel in Cyprus for five days of vibration training, pilates and yoga. You'll also enjoy massage, jet pools and hydro baths. (From \$1484; aphroditehills.com)

KICK IT IN KOH SAMUI

Combine opulent living and brutal violence with Muay Thai classes in the beautiful W resort. For the true aficionado, there's the option of one-on-one classes with a champion and a trip to Bangkok to watch some bouts. (From \$966; wretreatkohsamui.com)

GET SKI FIT IN LA FRANCE

Too often, skiing is secondary to gallons of *vin rouge* and mountains of fondue. Not at Ferme du Ciel in the French Alps. The six-day program features three-and-a-half on the slopes with the remainder divided between cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and yoga. (From \$1590; fermeduciel.com)

TOUR DE CALIFORNIA

San Diego's five-star Rancho Valencia takes fitness as seriously as it does luxury. Its cycling retreats are a chance to hone your skills over long rides with retired pros. (From \$2673; ranchovalencia.com)

RUN LIKE A KENYAN

In the Kenyan town of Iten – altitude 2400m – running legends are made. Join their training ranks at four-time world champion Lornah Kiplagat's High Altitude Training Centre. (Two weeks from \$1775; traininkenya.com)

Like that? Play "The Game", a Special Forces simulation held in the opulent environs of a French chateau, with training from SAS veterans.

(From \$4220 per person; chateaubouffemont.com)

36-37

BUNGEE THE WORLD'S GREATEST WATERFALL

At his quickest, Usain Bolt can cover 100m in 9.58 seconds. Impressive stuff, but a mere crawl compared with the 75km/h you'll reach bungee jumping at Victoria Falls – the world's largest waterfall. The rapids of the Zambezi River provide a dramatic backdrop as you plunge 111m in just four seconds.

(\$155; victoriafallsbungee.com)

Like That? With 11 waterfalls, Mauritius's Tamarin Canyon is a favourite for canyoning at all levels. For a grand finish, the 40m free-fall waterfall is undeniably hardcore.

(\$130; mauritiusattractions.com)

38-39

SAIL THE DESERT

There's a whole lot of nothing in Nevada. Once you're away from the bright lights of Vegas, the desert stretches out before you, with arid lakebeds creating vast salt flats – perfect terrain for landsailing. Out here, it's the only sailing you'll find. Misfit Flats and Inyanpah Dry Lake are the US's best landsailing spots, where 80km/h winds propel your craft at scorching speeds. Bring goggles and sunblock. Don't worry about the lifejacket.

(From \$340; omegalandsailing.com)

Like That? Surf the dunes of Kalbarri in WA, taking on the mighty Superbowl, a towering 85m-high sand crater.

(From \$95; sandboardingaustralia.com.au)

40-41

CYCLE THE CEILING OF THE WORLD

A 10-day cycling trip at 5000m in the Himalayas is nothing short of life-affirming. And intense. You will hurt all over, but there's payback: epic mountain passes, tea plantations, subtropical rainforests and finally the ascent to Kardung, the world's highest motorable pass.

(From \$2690; fitnessadventures.com.au)

Like That? Push yourself to the limit in Abu Dhabi's desert dunes on a fat bike. They eat any terrain, including shifting sands, for breakfast – hence their fatness.

(From \$60; qasralsarab.anantara.com)

48-49

SURF IN NORWAY

Cold-water surfing is more than a masochistic trial by ice – it's a way of life to a growing subculture of extreme surfers. They're attracted by the regular swell and never-ridden-before breaks of cold northern shores. Norway's rugged coastline takes the full brunt of the North Sea's westerlies, driving waves that are world class. This surf camp at Stadt, near Bergen, is the ultimate way to chill. (From \$910; lapointcamps.com)

Like That? Perfect waves, bath-temperature water and no crowds: Ghana is emerging as a surf-snob fave. (From \$585; blackstarsurfshop.com)



50-51

RECHARGE WITH AYURVEDA IN THAILAND

Ayurveda, the traditional Hindu approach to medicine and wellbeing, has been around for over 4000 years (longer even than aspirin). Sample a feel-good slice of the lifestyle at Thailand's Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai Hotel – a historically inspired palace featuring a dedicated clinic.

(From \$994; dharadhevi.com)

Like That? Get "alkalized" in the subtropical hinterlands of Byron Bay. Hell, who doesn't want killer pH levels? (From \$4185; byronbaydetoxretreats)

52-53

BE A BIG CHAIN HUNTER

Starting on the highland plains of South Africa, then plunging into the vast wilderness of Botswana, this trip lets you mountain bike two amazing safari trails that promise giraffe, wildebeest, elephant and zebra sightings as you tackle ancient elephant paths. The game trails are also host to lions and leopards. Luckily you'll be safely in camp with cold beer and hot showers by the time they catch up to you.

(From \$3298; ridebig.com)

Like That? Cycle Namibia's infamous Skeleton Coast in search of the rare black rhino, a species so endangered there are only a tick over 5000 left. (From \$4864; mountainbikeworldwide.com)



54-55

GO NOMAD

Saddle up your camel for an epic trip across the Sahara. After a hard day (for the camel), you'll settle down beneath a star-studded sky and breathe in the spice odours wafting around camp from the bubbling tagine.

(From \$50 a day; saharadeserttour.com)

Like That? The time-poor can try a four-day tour of Jordan, taking in the ancient city of Petra, the wilderness of Wadi Rum and the Dead Sea.

(From \$532; viator.com)

56-57

PADDLE THROUGH THE AMAZON RAINFOREST

In 2007 Martin Strel became the first man to swim the entire 5310km length of the Amazon. On his trip he faced piranha, 4.5m catfish and the dreaded candiru, a parasitic fish that swims up the penis before locking itself in with a series of spikes. Thankfully, your member should remain safely out of the water on your four-day kayak up the Urubu River – a tributary of the behemoth that is the Amazon.

(From \$1380; amazonadventures.com)

Like That? Walk a stretch of the deadly Darien Gap, a rugged trail across Panama that connects the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. (\$5010, including meals and permits; secretcompass.com)

58-59

SWIM WITH DARWIN

The Galapagos Islands inspired Darwin to pen his theory of evolution – and you'll see why when you splash around in the ocean alongside seals, sea lions and marine iguanas. Make this wonderland of flora and fauna your natural selection.

(\$3075; intrepidtravel.com)

Like That? Dive for black pearls from a traditional Tahitian canoe – a gift guaranteed to produce a shower of kisses (at the very least). (From \$130; borapearl.com)

60-61

BE IN LEAGUES OF YOUR OWN

Drop 600m into the ocean depths off balmy Honduras in a specially built submarine. The pressure is fierce enough to crush bones and the sun is an alien concept. You'll experience darkness unlike anywhere else on earth and see real-life sea monsters. Jacques Cousteau ain't got shit on you.

(From \$1160 for 3.5 hours; stanleysubmarines.com)

Like That? Sleep with the fishes at Pemba Island's Manta Resort, near Zanzibar. Its man-made private island boasts an underwater bedroom. (\$1705; themantaresort.com)

62-63

SNORKEL WITH KILLER WHALES

Snorkelling alongside anything called "killer" gets the blood pumping that little bit faster. You'll gaze into the eyes of a 700-strong congregation of the brutes and return to dry land with the mother of all bragging rights. Our tip: leave your seal-fur wet suit at home.

(Six nights from \$5500; bigfishexpeditions.com)

Like this? See the Top End's notorious saltwater crocs up close, a reptile so remorselessly mean it saw off the dinosaurs. (Five-hour cruise from Darwin from \$110; viator.com)

64-65

BE A COWBOY IN BHUTAN

Head to the wild west... of Bhutan, on a two-week horseback safari through jaw-dropping scenery. Bhutan is a land steeped in mysticism, from the jungly lowlands to the snow-capped peaks. Now, what's Dzongkha for "yee-haw"?

(From \$7660; anotherworldadventures.com)

Like That? Take in the Top End on horseback, tracking the spectacular Adelaide River in the Northern Territory. (From \$1100; mtbundy.com.au)

66-67

GET HOLY IN THE HIMALAYAS

Swap the pin-stripes for an orange robe and live the life of a Spiti Valley monk in the Indian Himalayas. By the time you embark on a three-day pilgrimage to Dharamsala, you'll be a changed man (or at least over that debilitating *Minecraft* addiction).

(From \$2680; monkforamonth.com)

Like That? Join Northern Spain's gruelling Camino de Santiago pilgrimage. At 791km it's a test for the soul and the quads.

(From \$3930; frescotours.com)

68-69

DIVE INTO HEAVEN

New Zealand boasts some of the most stunning mountain ranges in the world. Whether you'll appreciate all that beauty as you plummet 4500m from a plane over the Remarkables remains to be seen.

(From \$285; nzoneskydive.co.nz)

Like That? For those with the *cojones* and the bank balance, head to Mt Everest to experience the rush of a parachute landing on the world's highest drop zone.

(From \$45,000 for a tandem jump; everest-skydive.com)

70-75

6 TASTY GETAWAYS

Sate your appetite and feed your mind

CATCH AND COOK

Hook a yabby then cook it up in Forbes, NSW. The freshwater crustaceans are in abundance in the streams, dams and lakes surrounding the idyllic country town.

(Free; finditinforbes.com.au)

SNUFFLE OUT TRUFFLES

Pick up your gastronome-bragging star with a four-day sojourn in Umbria, learning to find and prepare your own truffles, then relaxing in a luxurious 18th-century Italian villa just outside the foodie haven of Perugia. (From \$1115; lemarchholiday.net)

LEARN TO COOK LIKE A FRENCH CHEF

Bordeaux's Côté Cours cooking school will teach you the difference between a roux and a meltdown. (From \$120; saintjames-bouliac.com/en/home-luxury-hotel-bordeaux)

TRAIN LIKE THE TV TALENT

If you're a *MasterChef* manqué, or *My Kitchen Rules* tragic, you can train to follow in the footsteps of celeb chefs by heading to the UK's Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons to learn the tricks of French master Raymond Blanc. (\$680; belmond.com)

HAVE A FEAST ON BOARD

Cruise the Kimberly coast aboard the North Star – the ship is licensed for fishing and if you catch anything the chef will cook it. (Seven nights from \$11,095; northstarcruises.com.au)

FARM YOUR OWN FOOD

Learn to knock up gourmet paddock-to-plate fare using heirloom vegetables and rare-breed animals at The Agrarian Kitchen cooking school in Tassie. (From \$385; theagrariankitchen.com)



76-77

LIVE A TOP GUN LIFE

We feel the need... to be Tom Cruise, before he got weird. Take to the skies with real fighter pilots above the Arizona desert in an Extra 300L, a high-performance aerobatic plane that'll generate a cheek-fluttering 5G force. (From \$1055; fightercombat.com)

Like That? Dial back the Gs with a seaplane flight to Whitehaven Beach in Queensland's Whitsundays. (From \$255; redballoon.com.au)

78-79

CLIMB ITALY

Follow in the footholds of World War I soldiers in the Dolomites, the main theatre of war on the Austro-Hungarian and Italian frontline.

(From \$825; badmoos.it)

Like That? Follow in the footsteps of World War II spies and Special Ops resistance fighters across the mountains of Albania. (From \$1655; enduranceviletrail.com)

80

AND FINALLY... THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE

If you make it to the end of this list, professional adventurer Jamie Bunchuk recommends a spell living with Kirghiz nomads among the barren 6000m peaks of the Pamir Mountains in eastern Tajikistan. Bunchuk describes the trip as one of the "rawest and most exhilarating experiences ever".

(From \$5765; secretcompass.com)



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Shop online to get Geelong star Jimmy Bartel's look



Save recipes to your phone



● IN THIS ISSUE:

Page 72 Shop off the page for Jimmy Bartel's kit
Page 106 Download these simple lunch-box recipes

Page 132 Watch a Q&A with Bootcamp-founder Chief Brabon
Page 134 Save Brabon's fat-torching workout to your phone

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TRAINER / FUEL

COACH

DROP AND GIVE ME...EVERYTHING!

A FEROCIOUS FAT-BURNING SESSION WITH
ORIGINAL BOOTCAMP FOUNDER CHIEF BRABON
PAGE 132

PLUS 137 FILL YOUR SHIRT: MUSCLE-BUILDING SECRETS FROM A VETERAN IRONWORKER

DANIEL LINNET

*The world is your gym:
Brabon spins some
Spider-Man push-ups*

WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU...

Chief Brabon, founder of Australia's Original Bootcamp, has redefined the limits of physical and mental toughness. Want to achieve gains you never thought possible? Heed his lessons

BY AARON SCOTT PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL LINNET

WHEN JIM BRABON enlisted in the Australian Army as a wiry 17-year-old, he had yet to earn the title of "Chief". In fact, to the recruitment officer, he looked anything but. A stick-thin kid who stood 183 centimetres tall and weighed 64 kilos? The recruiter shook his head and handed back the skinny kid's papers.

But Brabon wasn't taking no for an answer. Sure, he had the fragile build of an Ethiopian highlander. But he also had the will to match: he'd run a sub-three-hour marathon as a 16-year-old, faking his birth certificate to gain entry to the over-18s race. So he squared up to the recruitment officer and promised he could outrun and out-lift any of the other recruits.

The recruitment officer took the bait. He picked two big, likely lads and lined them up against the skinny kid, then he ran the trio through a gauntlet of physical tests. In every one, Brabon left the bigger men for dead. The officer raised his eyebrows and handed the kid a set of fatigues.

In the rank and file of the Royal Australian Regiment, word of Brabon's audacious challenge spread. He promptly developed a reputation for being scarily fit. Soldiers preparing for the Special Forces started asking him to train them. The sessions he created were short and horribly sharp: high-intensity intervals, full-body moves, the group working as one.

But as the sessions were ferociously difficult so they were fabulously effective. Soon, a group of the soldiers' wives approached him. They'd noticed their husbands were in sparkling shape and they wanted in, too. He began running sessions for the girls. So the Bootcamp was born and "chief trainer" Brabon earned his title of "Chief". The moniker stuck.

He soon realised he relished training more than soldiering. He handed back his fatigues and moved to Sydney where he started running his Bootcamp on Bondi Beach. But those years in camouflage imparted a powerful message: when it comes to achieving a goal, discipline will always trump motivation.

"In the military, everything's done in the group dynamic," he explains. "You never punish the individual, you punish the group." If the group's given a set of push-ups, for example, and one soldier doesn't squeeze out the final rep, the whole group does it again, until everyone gets it right. "What happens is you don't end up with one person motivating you; the whole group motivates you. You push harder and you do it properly. You don't go till you want to stop – you go till you're told to stop." That's the first lesson.

Lesson 2: Aim for pain

What's the toughest workout Brabon's ever faced? He smiles grimly – that would be the SWAT training course he did back in 2006. By his own estimation, the course was "hell". The challenges were fiendishly difficult, the pace relentless, the heat volcanic. Midway through the course, he leapt off a three-metre fence, landed

awkwardly and heard the ominous crunch of a broken ankle. The attending medicos swarmed. But he wouldn't let them take his boot off – he knew the busted joint would swell like a balloon. Instead, he instructed them to tape his boot up and pushed on with the training.

The final test of the day involved sprinting up a five-storey building in full body armour carrying a battering ram. He took the steps two at a time. "Yeah, I was in pain," he says. "But it wasn't the worst pain I'd ever been through. So I kept going."

That afternoon's agony redefined Brabon's relationship with pain. Suffering wasn't an impassable wall – it was simply a trail marker on the path to greater suffering. "You need to constantly challenge yourself so you create new reference points of pain," he explains. "Ask yourself: is this the worst discomfort I've been through? If it's not, there's no reason to stop."

Lesson 3: Let sweat heal

So what's the worst pain he's ever endured? This time Brabon doesn't smile. He was working as a bodyguard at the opening of Sydney's Fox Studios in 1998 when he noticed three men wearing suits and carrying backpacks. Strange, he thought. He wandered over to see what they were doing. The men bolted.

He gave chase, catching them as they were climbing the back wall of the lot. He tackled one, dragged another to the ground, then scurried up the wall. At the top, he found himself face to face with a man clutching a four-by-two. The man swung, catching Brabon in the face, crumpling both his cheekbones and breaking his nose. Brabon toppled off the wall and landed flat on his back.

An X-ray confirmed the worst: he'd fractured his C1 vertebrae. "And from that day on," he says, "I've had a headache 24 hours a day, seven days a week. After it happened, I'd sleep four hours on a good night. On bad nights I'd go three days

without sleep." He tried to run, but the pain in his head built and built until he blacked out. He kept running and kept waking up face down in the gutter.

Doctors informed him that nerves in his neck had been permanently damaged. The headaches would never subside. And, no, he would never run again without succumbing to the inevitable blackout. The news cut deep. "I had a massive breakdown. I was suicidal, depressed, addicted to painkillers."

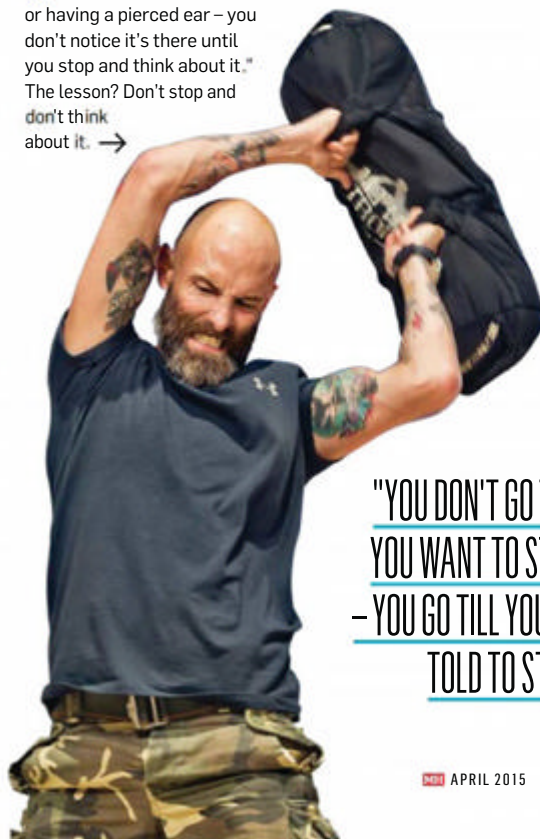
The lone speck of light in those dark days was the thought of heading down to the beach with his clients and letting sweat cleanse the grit from his mind. It's the old truism of exercise as panacea. He grins: "Honestly, it's what kept me going during those years."

Lesson 4: Ignore the hurt

Sixteen years on and Brabon continues to run Original Bootcamp (bootcamp.com.au) with his wife, Emilie. It's a veritable fitness empire, with camps operating from Bunbury to Cairns.

When time allows, he travels the world snapping out ultra-marathons. To minimise the blackouts that have continued to plague him, he's formulated his own training plan, subbing high-intensity intervals for the long, grinding runs of marathon lore. Evidently his system works: he's won everything from the NSW 50km track title to the Hunter-Gatherer Ultra, a 50km survival race through the badlands of Texas.

He shrugs: "People say to me, 'Wow, your headaches must be better'. Well, no. My headaches are no better than they were when I was taking horse tranquillisers to sleep. The difference is, I've learnt to cope with it. It's like wearing a ring or having a pierced ear – you don't notice it's there until you stop and think about it." The lesson? Don't stop and don't think about it. →



**"YOU DON'T GO TILL
YOU WANT TO STOP
– YOU GO TILL YOU'RE
TOLD TO STOP"**



THE MAN-MAKER WORKOUT

Reckon you know the outer limits of pain? Time to create a new reference point. This barbaric 30-minute workout from Chief Brabon will incinerate kilojoules and torch fat, leaving you with a lean, hard and brutally functional body

DIRECTIONS: complete the circuit on these pages 3-4 times. Do the workout 2-3 days a week, resting for at least one day between sessions. Chief recommends doing it on soft sand – the instability calls more muscles into play.

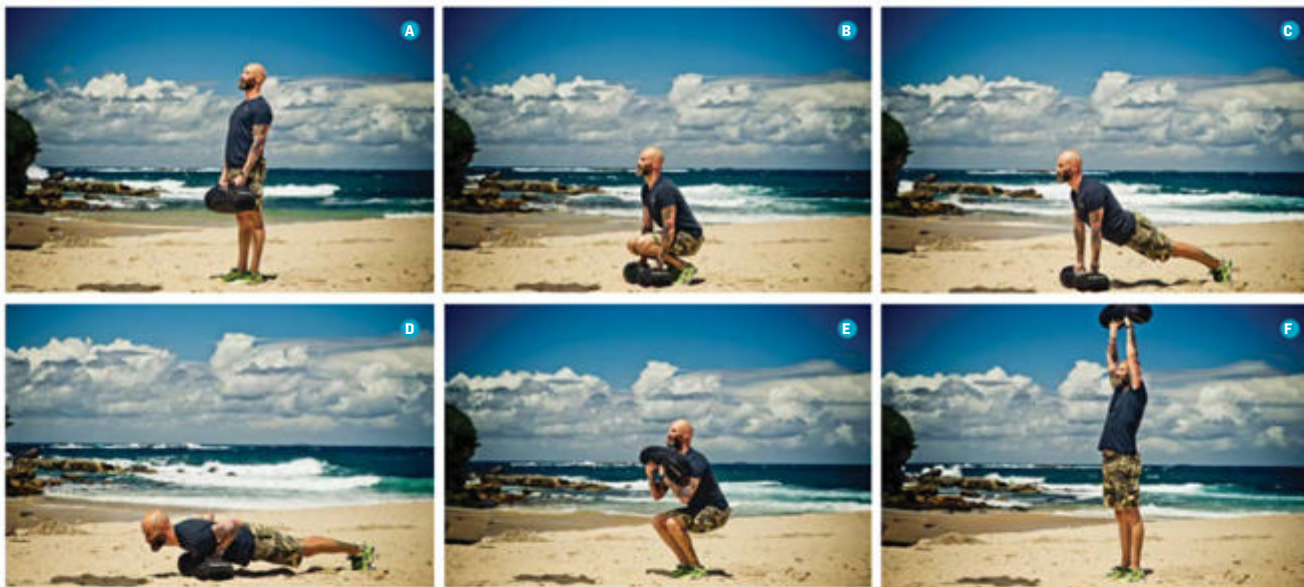
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT: a sandball and sandbag



1 10-Point Body Builders*

(45 SECONDS ON, 15 SECOND RECOVERY)

Hold the sandbag at thigh level, your feet hip-width apart. Squat down until the bag is sitting in front of your toes. Kick out to a push-up position, then kick your legs as wide as possible before pulling them back together. Drop into a push-up, tapping your chest on the bag. Drive out of the push-up, then kick your legs back into a deep squat. Drive through your heels and clean the bag onto your chest – you should be in a deep squat when you catch it. Drive up to a standing position, simultaneously pressing the bag over your head. Lower the bag back to the start position. That's one rep.



2 Bulgarian Swings

(45 SECONDS ON, 15 SECOND RECOVERY)

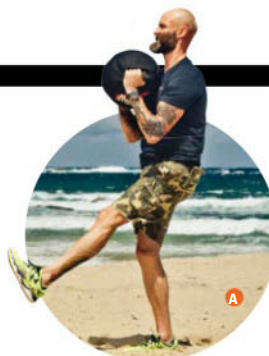
Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width, holding the bag at thigh level. Swing the bag to your right, then let it swing back across your thighs to the left. As the bag reaches hip level, drive it straight over your head in a circular motion until it drops back down to your right. Don't pause – use the momentum to swing into the next rep.



3 Swing Snatch

(45 SECONDS ON, 15 SECOND RECOVERY, THEN SWITCH ARMS AND REPEAT)

Start with the sandball in front of your toes. Grab the handle with your right hand and swing the ball back between your legs. Drive your hips forward and snap up to a standing position, lifting the ball over your head. Punch your fist under the ball to catch it, then swing the ball down in front of you. Use the momentum to drive into the next rep.



4 Pistol Squat*

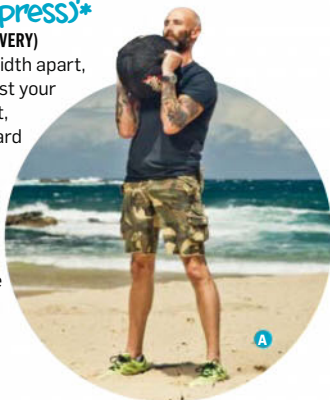
(30 SECONDS ON, 15 SECOND RECOVERY, THEN SWITCH LEGS AND REPEAT)

Hold the ball against your chest and balance on your right foot, your left leg extended in front of you. Drop into a deep squat – you may need to push the ball away from your chest to stop yourself falling backwards. Drive back to a standing position, keeping your left foot off the ground.

5 Sot's Press (aka squat to overhead press)*

(30 SECONDS ON, 15 SECOND RECOVERY)

Stand with your feet hip-width apart, holding the sandball against your chest. Sit into a deep squat, pushing your elbows forward to keep your back straight. Holding this position, drive the ball above your head. Slowly lower the ball back to your chest. Keeping your elbows forward, drive back to the start position.



* BEGINNERS AND ANYONE WITH A KNEE INJURY SHOULD EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN SQUATTING BEYOND 90° KNEE FLEXION.

6 Turkish Get-up

(60 SECONDS ON, 30 SECOND RECOVERY, THEN SWITCH ARMS AND REPEAT)

Lie on your back with the sandball to your right. Grab the handle with your right hand, then roll onto your back so the ball is now on your chest. Punch the ball straight up. Bend your right knee and plant your right foot flat on the ground. Keeping your eyes on the ball, push down through your heel and roll onto your left elbow. Push down through your left hand, driving up until your left elbow is straight. Holding your weight on your left hand and right foot, lift your bum up off the ground. Holding this position, swing your left leg under your right leg. Push up into a kneeling position, the sandball above your head. Keeping your body tight, stand up. Reverse these movements to lower yourself to the start position. That's one rep.



MHI ESSENTIALS

Our guide to what's happening and what's new



NEXT-GEN CEREAL

Make a positive start to your day with new, delicious O&G crunchy granola. It's packed with oat clusters, luscious cranberries, toasted hazelnuts and pepita seeds. It's real, yummy goodness packed with protein to help kickstart your day.



BACK TO THE FUTURE

The Pump is back! For the first time in 10 years, Reebok is putting the Pump back in their running shoes with the ZPump Fusion. With its 360° locked-in custom fit, this shoe will keep your foot securely in place while ensuring supreme handling and control.



OFF-ROAD CLASS

The contemporary design and unique silhouette of the Range Rover Evoque guarantee you'll stand out in the city. And when situations become more challenging, the Evoque's innate capability allows it to tackle all terrains and weather conditions with confidence. A true Land Rover at heart. Find out more at landrover.com.au



COOL BRITANNIA

Ben Sherman, known for championing the button-up shirt since 1963, have not disappointed with their AW15 collection. Signature Ben Sherman styles and fabrics are blended together with new-season prints, including paisley, pop tartan and foliage prints, in a collection inspired by the great British outdoors. Visit shop.bensherman.com.au

OUT-RUN CHAFING

Zo Rub provides a barrier against friction to protect the skin, helping prevent the redness and soreness caused by sweating, rubbing and chafing. It's specially formulated to help retain moisture in the skin, while also keeping the skin dry to help prevent sweat rash. Available now from all leading pharmacies.



THE POWER OF 'ROO

The Aussie kangaroo is a lean, mean, fighting machine. These qualities deliver a terrific source of high-quality protein. A 150-gram serving of cooked kangaroo fillet provides an average adult with 92 per cent of their daily protein needs. What's more, kangaroo is impressively low in fat, and particularly low in undesirable saturated fats. All the more reason to eat up and enjoy! Available in supermarkets. Find out more at gourmetgame.com.au



LIBERTY SETS THE PACE

The all-new Subaru Liberty is here. With a sleek, aerodynamic look and groundbreaking technology, it's taking the sedan places it's never been before. See your nearest Subaru retailer or visit subaru.com.au

LOCK AND LOAD

When you do chin-ups, really focus on minimising the movement of your legs. Once you can do 12 in a row with perfect form, start adding extra weight. But never cheat. If your arms aren't locked at the bottom of every chin-up then it's the same as doing half a biceps curl.

BUDDY UP

Introduce a horizontal pulling exercise like seated rows or cable pulls. Get a workout buddy to place his hand in the middle of your back and aim to squeeze his fingers with your shoulderblades on every rep.

HIT REVERSE

All-day sitting tends to cause your shoulders to round. Reverse the effect by opening your chest up and pulling your shoulders back. Perform two back exercises for every push exercise as a minimum.

NO JUNK

Reducing your waist size and body fat will naturally give you more of a V shape. The biggest dietary tweak to focus on? Eat less processed junk and more wholefoods.

HIRED HELP

Even Tiger Woods has a swing coach. Your take-home? Seek advice from an experienced trainer once a month to keep your training evolving. It doesn't have to be expensive – team up with a buddy to cut costs.

BEAT STRESS

When you're stressed, your body produces cortisol. That can make it harder to lose weight. As soon as you notice you're getting stressed, focus on slowing your breathing. Start by breathing in for two seconds, out for two seconds. Work up to four seconds in, four seconds out.

A VITAL MOVE

The overhead press is vital for developing your shoulders. Dumbbells are generally better, as each arm works independently. But a barbell is good for maximum loading.

ALL CHANGE

Try the bottom-up press with a kettlebell. Hold the handle and rotate until the bottom of the bell faces the ceiling. From here, press the kettlebell up until your arm is almost straight. Freshening up your workout every 4-6 weeks delivers different stimulation to your muscles.

GO EASY

Don't underestimate the volume of kilojoules in liquids. A can of Coke, a glass of wine and three lattes can amount to half your daily kilojoule intake.

EASY EATS

A banana and a handful of cashews makes for a great snack. They'll give you a bit of all the macro food groups – carbs, protein and fats. Got a sweet tooth? Sub the banana for a handful of strawberries.

TRADE SECRETS

GIVE ME A V

Michael Cunico, National Personal Training Manager for Fitness First, explains how to sculpt broader shoulders and a trimmer waist

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OUTRUN FAT WITH CARBS

Carb cycling sounds simple: gorge on bread, pasta and potatoes one day, shun them the next. The reality, however, can be a lot more complicated



THE DIET CARB CYCLING

IN A NUTSHELL

A carbohydrate rollercoaster designed to burn fat and boost performance

THE MH EDIT

Hold the tedious arithmetic and use carb cycling on one workout day a week only

THE THINKING BEHIND THIS DIET is to alternate high- and low-carb days. "On high days, you need about 500 grams," says Kate Percy, author of *Go-Faster Food*. That's a lot – we're talking eight large baked potatoes. On low days, meanwhile, you eat a tenth of that and, according to the theory, your body turns to its stored fat for the fuel it needs.

It's a fine theory, but so is relativity – and this is about as complicated. "Go too crazy on high-carb days and you risk destabilising your insulin levels and gaining fat," says Percy. "You may feel irritable on non-carb days, too."

The answer: carb-load one workout day a week, sandwiched between two days that are lower in carbs. So today, go at that pasta like a freshly dumped Bridget Jones, hit the gym hard, and prime your body to burn more fat tomorrow.

THE CARB CYCLING EDIT

MEAL	WHY
BREAKFAST <i>Porridge with berries and a banana</i>	<i>Shock your body with high carbs for a metabolic lift</i>
PRE-GYM <i>Chicken, vegies, mozzarella and 250g of quinoa</i>	<i>Quinoa gives you glycogen, but won't spike your insulin levels</i>
POST-GYM <i>Tin of tuna, wholegrain pasta and an apple</i>	<i>Low-GI pasta will help your recovery after working out</i>
DINNER <i>Chilli con carne with two sweet potatoes</i>	<i>Sweet potatoes provide manganese, which reduces fat storage from carbs</i>

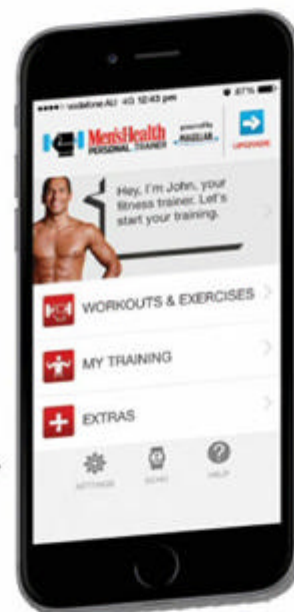


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NEXT MONTH

IN MAY'S *MH*

OUR *MH* MAN REVEALED

ON SALE
APRIL 6

Find out what it takes to grace our cover: the winner of our *Men's Health* Man competition reveals the secrets of his success. Plus, get killer training tips from all the finalists.



JASONIERACE



THE PORN ULTIMATUM

Is the moral panic surrounding internet porn warranted? Our writer examined his online ogling habits and consulted the experts to discover the truth about carnal clickbait.



MONSTER INK

It seems these days almost everyone has a tat... or 12. What's driving our urge to stamp our identity? What do your tats say about you? And what are your options should you regret all that spilt ink?



HOW TO DO EVERYTHING FASTER

Time is precious. You can't stop the clock but you can steal from it. Find out how to do everything – from working out to winning Monopoly – at warp speed.

A smiling man in a black t-shirt is in the foreground, flexing his biceps. In the background, another person is on a stationary bike in a gym setting.

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UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE

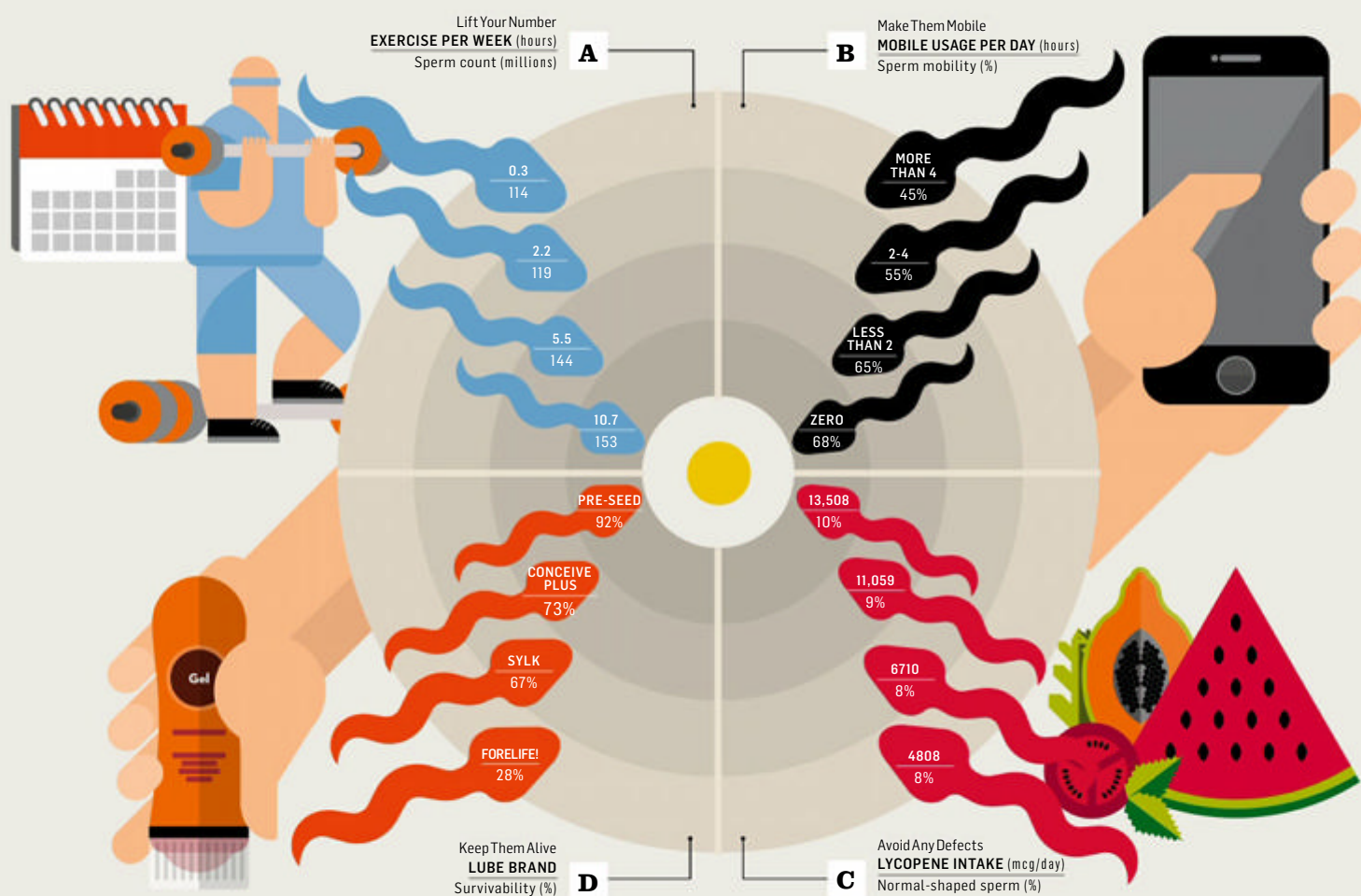
THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO EVERYTHING

WEEKEND PROJECT

Make a Baby: Your Fertility Cheat Sheet

Your money shot may be a blank. About 15 per cent of couples have trouble conceiving, and at least a fifth of the time the man's sperm is at fault, according to Andrology Australia. So get busy: sperm quality peaks in colder months, and low-stress weekends offer your best chances of success. Reproductive medicine specialist Dr Ashok Agarwal explains how to improve your baby-making odds.

—K. Aleisha Fetterers



A A typical ejaculation typically contains from 15 million to 150 million sperm. To maximise your potential payload, you need to work up a sweat outside the bedroom, says Agarwal. In fact, Harvard researchers found that men who worked out the most had a 33 per cent higher sperm count than those who exercised the least. That's because vigorous exercise burns fat while boosting testosterone.

B Your sperm must carry out their mission in 12-14 hours. That's how long the egg remains viable. Success can depend on their swimming speed. So help them out: put down the smartphone (or at least don't keep it in your trouser pocket). In a Cleveland Clinic study, men who used their phones more had decreased sperm mobility, perhaps because of the phones' electromagnetic waves.

C Sperm are not perfectly shaped. In fact, 90-plus per cent of the average guy's swimmers may be too deformed to penetrate the egg. Excess free radicals may be to blame, Agarwal says. Consuming foods rich in the antioxidant lycopene is one solution, Harvard scientists say. (For a quick boost, eat spaghetti napolitana: a quarter cup of tomato sauce has 8500 micrograms.)

D If your swimmers are going to complete their mission, they need to stay alive – and your choice of lube matters. Even lubes that are touted as “all natural” may contain chemicals that are acidic or alkaline enough to poison your sperm. Save your sperm with a blend specifically designed for procreation.



WHAT IF YOU ACTUALLY...

Gave Every Girl Your Number?

It's Friday night. I'm playing pool in a crowded bar when a blonde walks in, triggering that most primal of instincts: Me. Want. Her. Typically I'd suppress the urge to approach. Maybe it's because I'm lame, but hitting on women seems somehow uncouth.

Thanks to the ultimate wingman (my smartphone), I prefer a lazier, no-risk way to reach out. I'll scroll through Tinder, hoping that now we've seen each other, we might also right-swipe to bypass some small talk. Or take a little trip through Instagram to see if she geo-tagged a selfie that I could comment on. (Think that's weird? Go tweet about it.)

Tonight I decide to make a risky last-second play. Pulling a pen and notepad out of my back pocket, I jot down my number and walk over. "Hey, I'm David," I say as I hand her the slip of paper. "You're compelling. Call me."

What exactly has gotten into me?

Well, my usual approach doesn't work that well. In fact, it never works. (One caveat: it does attract some crazy people.)

So I made a pact with myself: whenever I noticed an attractive woman, I would simply stop and give her my number. Then I'd be standing in front of her and could make a snap decision: head for the door or see if she wants me to stick around.

"Hysterical," says the woman at the bar – my first foray into this brave new dating world. She tells me her name is Alexandra. "Women can't help but be impressed by a man who's willing to make a fool of himself," she adds.

The night doesn't stop there. We have a few drinks, and I walk her back to her hotel for a goodnight kiss. "The next time I'm in town, I'll give you a call," she says.

Emboldened, I give my number out to a dozen more women over the next few days. There's no plan or script: just be nonchalant, never aggressive, and empower her to make the next move.

Yeah, it's gimmicky. But guess what? Most ladies are intrigued. True, a woman in yoga class rolls her eyes and walks off in a huff, but later that day I top up my courage and hand my digits to another gorgeous woman outside a hardware store. She asks me to stick around and have a coffee. A few hours later I try the same thing on another woman inside a bookstore. "You're funny," she says, smiling. We end up having a drink at a nearby bar.

While initially embarrassing, the gesture soon becomes exciting, even liberating. Instead of feeling like a seedy cybergeek, I'm a new man. A man who's bold enough to face rejection. But you know what? At least half the women I give my number to actually do call or text to meet up.

According to psychologist Dr Edward Royzman, it's the directness of this tactic that's so alluring to women. "You're revealing character traits, like boldness and a willingness to take chances, that from an evolutionary-psychology standpoint are appealing to the opposite sex." And Royzman says we also have our wi-fi-enabled hyperconnectivity to thank. "People now post information about themselves online that thousands of people they don't know can see, which in a sense trains them to be receptive to the idea of being intimate with total strangers."

Plus, there's the modern role reversal. She has my number. I don't have hers. That means I can sit back and wait for the phone to ring. At one point I give my number to a woman who's waiting outside a coffee shop. "Um, thanks?" she says dubiously. But the next day I get a text: "You might be nuts, but who isn't? Coffee sometime?"

Hmm... maybe. After all, my schedule is filling up fast.

—David Amsden, author of *Important Things That Don't Matter*

Q Dave,
I bought a bracelet for my ex, but we split up before I could give it to her. Can I give it to my new girlfriend, or is that weird? —GJ

Yeah, you'll probably get away with it. But just say a few years down the track you end up marrying this new girl. And years later someone compliments her on the bracelet. When your missus launches into a misty-eyed tale about the day you gave it to her, do you really want to feel like a fraud? I wouldn't. That bracelet might follow you your entire life, so if I were you, I'd ditch it and buy her another one. Just make sure she's going to stick around for a while, okay?

Q Dave,
Ever since I farted in a meeting, a couple of jokers make fart noises every time I walk by. How do I shut them up? —ER

That's a stinker of a situation, mate. Look, the world is full of fools who get their kicks making other people feel small. Ignoring these blokes is the mature thing to do. But then they might just try harder to piss you off – I've seen it happen a million times in my bar. So sling some of that stuff back. Tell them you just left a fart in their office; tell them you didn't know faces could fart too. Stoop to their level for a few days. If you join in the buffoonery with low-grade humour, they'll move on to something more rewarding. Like their jobs.

Q Dave,
How should I greet female co-workers in after-hours meet-ups? The hug? The cheek kiss? The wave? —JB

Here's your answer (and it's an easy one): let her decide. Most women have a pretty good idea of what they feel comfortable with. Maintain eye contact on the approach. If she offers the cheek, go for it. If she gives you a wave, keep your distance.



Need another round? Send your questions to Dave the Barman at yahoo7.com.au/menshealth

Crush, the Numbers

WE FIND OUT WHAT MAKES YOUR HEART GO THUMP

1 IN 4 Proportion of men who pulled their first crush's hair to get her attention

1 IN 2 Proportion who suffered through their puppy love in silence

NAVIGATE YOUR SON'S FIRST LOVE

Don't be dismissive of your boy's youthful yearnings. "You want to validate the emotional impact of this experience," says psychologist Dr Jeffrey Bernstein. So be collaborative, not adversarial, and try not to interrogate the kid. Your line: "It's good you're sharing this with me. What's so special about this person?" That way your lad is less inclined to shut you out later, when a crush progresses into a real relationship.

69 Percentage of guys whose first crush was on one of their classmates

29 Percentage who became enamoured with a cartoon character as a kid



Animated gal the average guy loved the most: Jessica Rabbit

28 Percentage of men who say fantasising is a telltale sign of infatuation

5 Percentage who say stalking her on Facebook is the real giveaway

LET HER DOWN EASY

Nearly a quarter of blokes admit that they encourage admirers even when the feeling isn't mutual. Not a good move. If she's interested and you're not, be honest and final – without going into specifics. "Don't start describing the type of woman you like or say she's not your type," says Dr Audrey Nelson, a gender communications expert. Simply say you don't think you're compatible. Don't apologise or say she's a "great girl" – that's just patronising.



Percentage who fell for the teacher: **7**



The average guy's biggest guy crushes: Bradley Cooper, Brad Pitt

90 Percentage of men who tend to fall for their female friends

29 Percentage who've successfully taken those friendships to the next level

26 Percentage of office guys who've fallen for one of the company's interns

19 Percentage who've found themselves obsessing over the boss instead

1

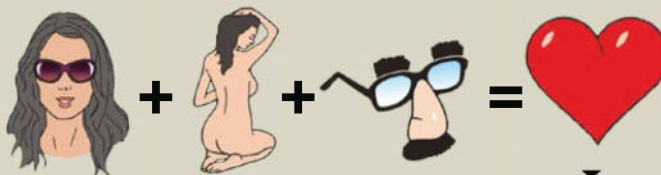
Number of months the average guy carries a torch before giving up

KICK THOSE JITTERS TO THE KERB

You know confidence is attractive, yet you choke every time the object of your affection enters the room. So practise.

"The more you hit on women, the more relaxed you'll be," says Nelson. "Refine your repertoire of open-ended questions, such as how she likes her spin class." Then, once you do approach her, keep the chat all about her. It's when you start talking about yourself that you feel self-conscious, Nelson adds. You also risk embellishing things to impress her. Your fumbles won't stand out if you're focused on her.

10 Percentage of men who say Mila Kunis is their biggest celebrity crush



Qualities most likely to trigger the average guy's infatuation: beautiful face, hot body, great sense of humour

Trait that'll douse the flame the fastest: promiscuity





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